Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

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Editor's Note: The President was at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on October 31, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Proclamation 7726—United Nations Day, 2003

October 24, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The United Nations is a vital international arena for countries to cooperate in pursuit of political, economic, and social freedoms. Founded by 51 Member countries after World War II, the organization has grown through the years to include 191 Member States. On United Nations Day, we celebrate the organization's founding principles of freedom, democracy, and human rights, and we recognize the contributions of the United Nations to improving lives around the world.

As an original signatory of the United Nations Charter, the United States continues to advance the United Nations' founding principles. We are working with the United Nations to reduce conflicts around the world, fight terrorism, abolish trafficking in persons, and support those in need, including the people of Afghanistan and Iraq as they continue to build free and stable countries. As we commemorate the 58th anniversary of the United Nations, we honor the victims of the recent bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad who worked to advance peace and freedom.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 24, 2003, as United Nations Day. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas under the flag of the United States to honor the observance of United Nations Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:24 a.m., October 27, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 28. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 7725—Protection From Pornography Week, 2003

October 24, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Pornography can have debilitating effects on communities, marriages, families, and children. During Protection From Pornography Week, we commit to take steps to confront the dangers of pornography.

The effects of pornography are particularly pernicious with respect to children. The recent enactment of the PROTECT Act of 2003 strengthens child pornography laws, establishes the Federal Government's role in the AMBER Alert System, increases punishment for Federal crimes against children, and authorizes judges to require extended supervision of sex offenders who are released from prison.

We have committed significant resources to the Department of Justice to intensify investigative and prosecutorial efforts to combat obscenity, child pornography, and child sexual exploitation on the Internet. We are vigorously prosecuting and severely punishing those who would harm our children.

Last July, the Department of Homeland Security launched Operation Predator, an initiative to help identify child predators, rescue children depicted in child pornography, and prosecute those responsible for making and distributing child pornography.

Last year, I signed legislation creating the Dot Kids domain, a child-friendly zone on the Internet. The sites on this domain are monitored for content and safety, offering parents assurances that their children are learning in a healthy environment. Working together with law enforcement officials, parents, and other caregivers, we are making progress in protecting our children from pornography.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 26 through November 1, 2003, as Protection From Pornography Week. I call upon public officials, law enforcement officers, parents, and all the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:24 a.m., October 27, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 25, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 28.

The President's Radio Address

October 25, 2003

Good morning. Last month, I addressed the United Nations and told member countries that the peace and security of Iraq are essential to the peace and security of all free nations. I encouraged countries to help the people of Iraq to build a future of freedom and stability. I also called for a U.N. resolution supporting the efforts of our coalition in Iraq. The Security Council has now responded by unanimously passing Resolution 1511, which endorses a multinational force in Iraq under U.S. command and urges greater international support for Iraqi reconstruction.

In recent weeks, leaders of South Korea, Japan, Great Britain, Denmark, Spain, and other nations have committed billions of dollars to Iraqi reconstruction. This week brought even more progress. In Madrid, representatives of more than 70 nations and international bodies, including the World Bank, UNICEF, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, gathered to discuss the future needs of Iraq and the ways in which other countries can help. And these nations and international organizations pledged billions of dollars to aid the reconstruction of Iraq.

This growing financial support will allow us to build on the success of the broad military coalition already serving in Iraq. Today, American forces in Iraq are joined by about 24,000 troops from 32 other countries, including Great Britain, Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Thailand, El Salvador, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, and the Philippines. Coalition forces are helping to hunt down the terrorists and Saddam holdouts, clearing mines from Iraqi waterways so that aid shipments can proceed, and coordinating the recruitment and training of a new Iraqi police force, army, and border police.

Members of our coalition are also showing the compassion of our cause in Iraq. We are rebuilding schools and clinics and powerplants. The Iraqi people are moving steadily toward a free and democratic society. Economic life is being restored to the cities. A new Iraqi currency is circulating. Local governments are up and running. And Iraq will soon begin the process of drafting a constitution, with free elections to follow.

There is still difficult work ahead, because freedom has enemies in Iraq. Terrorists and loyalists of the former regime reveal their true character by their choice of targets. They have attacked diplomats and embassies,

relief workers, and the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, all symbols of the international effort to help the Iraqi people.

America and the international community will not be intimidated. Every coalition member understands that Iraq must never again become the home of tyranny and terror and a threat to the world. So we will be patient and determined and unified. America will continue working with the United Nations and our coalition partners to finish the work we have begun. Having liberated Iraq from a brutal tyrant, we will stand with the people of Iraq as that country becomes more stable, secure, and free.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:38 a.m. on October 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Presidential Envoy to Iraq L. Paul Bremer III and an Exchange With Reporters

October 27, 2003

The President. Good morning, everybody. I'll share a few words and then answer a couple of questions.

First, Ambassador Bremer and General Abizaid have been briefing the Secretary of Defense and my national security team, General Myers, about the situation in Iraq. We spent time talking about the success of the donors' conference, the fact that the world community is coming together to help build a free Iraq, and we want to thank the world for the willingness to step up and to help.

Ambassador Bremer was particularly pleased with not only the fact that governments stood up but that there was a series of private sector companies willing to help in Iraq, and that's a positive move for the people.

We spent time, obviously, on the security situation. There are terrorists in Iraq who are willing to kill anybody in order to stop our progress. The more successful we are on the ground, the more these killers will react. And our job is to find them and bring them to justice, which is precisely what General Abizaid briefed us on. It is a—the people have got to understand, the Iraqi people have got to understand that anytime you've got a group of killers willing to kill innocent Iraqis, that their future must not be determined by these kind of killers. That's what they've got to understand. I think they do understand that—they do. The Ambassador and the general were briefing me on the—the vast majority of Iraqis want to live in a peaceful, free world. And we will find these people, and we will bring them to justice.

This Government is determined to hear the call from the Iraqis, and the call is, they want a society in which their children can go to school, in which they can get good health care, in which they're able to live a peaceful life. It's in the national interest of the United States that a peaceful Iraq emerge. And we will stay the course in order to achieve this objective.

Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press], you've got a question?

Terrorist Attacks in Iraq

Q. Yes, sir. Mr. President, the attacks are getting more brazen. They're getting more frequent. What do you know about who is behind these attacks? Is it Saddam? And what steps did you all discuss this morning about better protecting U.S. personnel there?

The President. The best way to describe the people who are conducting these attacks are coldblooded killers, terrorists. That's all they are. They're terrorists. And the best way to find them is to work with the Iraqi people to ferret them out and go get them. And that's exactly what we discussed.

What was the other part of your question?

Protecting U.S. Personnel

Q. What steps did you discuss this morning about better protecting U.S. personnel?

The President. Well, I think if you—we've hardened a lot of our targets for U.S.

personnel there. And today's attacks were against places like the Red Cross or police stations. These people will kill Iraqis. They don't care who they kill. They just want to kill. And we will find them, exactly what we discussed on how best to do so.

The Iraqi people understand that there's a handful of people who don't want them to live in freedom, aren't interested in their children going to schools, aren't—don't really care about the nature of the health care they get, aren't pleased with the fact that the electricity is coming back online, aren't happy about the fact that Iraq is now selling oil on the world markets and people are finding work. And they'll do whatever it takes to stop this progress.

And our job is to work with the Iraqis to prevent this from happening. That's why we're working hard to get more Iraqi policemen. That's why we're working hard to build up the Iraqi armed forces, and that's why we're working hard with freedom-loving Iraqis to help ferret these people out before they attack and strike. And——

Q. But, sir——

The President. No, that's your question. Randy [Randall Mikkelsen, Reuters].

Madrid Donors' Conference/ Veto of Iraqi Aid Bill

Q. Mr. President, much of the aid offered for Iraq at the Madrid conference was in the form of loans, rather than grants. What impact might this have on your threat to veto the U.S.-Iraqi aid bill if part of the reconstruction aid is in loans?

The President. My attitude is the United States ought to provide reconstruction money in the form of grant.

Q. So no change in the veto threat, then?

The President. My attitude has been and still is that the money we provide Iraq ought to be in the form of a grant. And the reason why is we want to make sure that the constraints on the Iraqi people are limited so that they can flourish and become a free and prosperous society.

Let's see. Ryan [Ryan Donmoyer, Bloomberg News].

Terrorist Attacks in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Welcome back from Asia, sir.

The President. Thank you very much. I'm glad somebody welcomed me back. [*Laughter*] I better call on you first next time. [*Laughter*]

Q. If I may just follow on Deb's question.

The President. Yes.

Q. And actually, Mr. Bremer as well. The situation in Iraq, can you characterize how it is you come since July 23d, when you last met, I believe, with the President, and as you adjust tactics to deal with things like suicide bombers, what effect, if any, is that having on the hunt for weapons of mass destruction?

The President. I'll let the Ambassador speak. Again, I will repeat myself, that the more progress we make on the ground, the more free the Iraqis become, the more electricity is available, the more jobs are available, the more kids that are going to school, the more desperate these killers become because they can't stand the thought of a free society. They hate freedom. They love terror. They love to try to create fear and chaos. And what we're determined in this administration is not to be intimidated by these killers. As a matter of fact, we're even more determined to work with the Iraqi people to create the conditions of freedom and peace, because it's in our national interest we do so. It's in the interest of long-term peace in the world that we work for a free and secure and peaceful Iraq. A free and secure Iraq in the midst of the Middle East will have enormous historical impact.

You may want to speak to the issue, Ambassador.

Ambassador Bremer. Well, a lot of wonderful things have happened in Iraq since July, as you mentioned. We have a cabinet now, with ministers actually conducting affairs of state. We have met all of our goals in restoring essential services. All the schools and hospitals are open. Electricity is back at prewar levels. We're moving ahead with our plan. We'll have rough days, such as we've had the last couple of days. But the overall thrust is in the right direction, and the good days outnumber the bad days, and that's the thing you need to keep in perspective.

The President. Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News], yes. Last question. Sorry.

Southern California Wildfires

Q. The fires in Southern California now not only taking homes, but there are a number of casualties. What can your administration do to come in and help? Are you getting reports on what's happening in California?

The President. I am. Chief of Staff Andy Card spoke to the Governor last night, spoke to the Senators last night, Senator Boxer, spoke to Congressman Duncan Hunter, assured all three that the Federal Government will provide all resources necessary, at the request of the State, to work and fight these fires. FEMA Director Brown is on his way to California now. He will give us an assessment. We want to help put them out. This is a devastating fire, and it's a dangerous fire. And we're prepared to help in any way we can.

I'm sorry, one more question—sympathetic soul here.

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

Q. Thank you very much. Can you tell us if you will direct your staff to turn over the highly classified intelligence documents that the 9/11 Commission has so far been unsuccessfully seeking, even if they are Presidential daily briefings, and if so, when?

The President. Yes, those are very sensitive documents. And my attorney, Al Gonzales, is working with Chairman Kean.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:04 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. Richard B. Myers, USAF, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Governor Gray Davis of California; Mike Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response; Counsel to the President Alberto R. Gonzales; and Thomas H. Kean, Chair, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). A reporter referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

The President's News Conference

October 28, 2003

The President. Good morning. After the 26,000-mile journey last week, I hope the members of the traveling press had a restful weekend. I have a brief statement. Then I'll be glad to take questions.

On my trip to Asia, I had a series of very productive meetings with some of America's closest allies in the war on terror. Nations such as Australia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines are fighting terrorism in their own region. Their leaders understand the importance of our continuing work in Afghanistan and Iraq. Liberating the people of those nations from dictatorial regimes was an essential step in the war on terror, and the world is safer today because Saddam Hussein and the Taliban are gone. We're now working with many nations to make sure Afghanistan and Iraq are never again a source of terror and danger for the rest of the world.

Our coalition against terror has been strengthened in recent days by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511. This endorses a multinational force in Iraq under U.S. command, encourages other nations to come to the aid of the Iraqi people. Last week a donor conference in Madrid brought together more than 70 nations to discuss future contributions to Iraqi reconstruction. America appreciates the recent announcements of financial commitments to Iraq offered by many of the donors at the conference.

After decades of oppression and brutality in Iraq and Afghanistan, reconstruction is difficult, and freedom still has its enemies in both of those countries. These terrorists are targeting the very success and freedom we're providing to the Iraqi people. Their desperate attacks on innocent civilians will not intimidate us or the brave Iraqis and Afghans who are joining in their own defense and who are moving toward self-government.

Coalition forces aided by Afghan and Iraqi police and military are striking the enemy with force and precision. Our coalition is growing in members and growing in strength. Our purpose is clear and certain: Iraq and Afghanistan will be stable, independent nations, and their people will live in freedom.

This essential goal in the war on terror requires continued American leadership and the continued support of Congress. The House and the Senate are now considering my supplemental request for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most of this money is for the safety and success of our military, for their pay, for their weapons, ammunition, body armor, vehicles, fuel, and for every other resource they need to carry out their mission. Part of the money is for reconstruction, from the training of Afghan and Iraqi police and military personnel to the building of schools and clinics. These funding requests are just as critical to the overall success in Iraq.

I commend the House and the Senate for approving the supplemental request. I urged both Houses of Congress to reach agreement soon on a final bill so these vital funds can go quickly to where they are needed.

I also asked Congress to move forward on elements of my agenda for growth and jobs. After the shocks of the stock market decline, recession, terrorist attack, and corporate scandals, our economy is showing signs of broad and gathering strength. America is starting to add new jobs. Retail sales are strong. Business profits are increasing. The stock market has been advancing. The housing construction is surging, and manufacturing production is rising. All of this can—all of us can be optimistic about the future of the economy, but we cannot be complacent. I will not be satisfied until every American who is looking for work can find a job.

So I proposed additional measures to keep the economy on the path to greater job creation: taking action to control the rising cost of health care; protecting businesses from junk lawsuits; by cutting needless and costly Government regulations; by making permanent the tax cuts that have helped our economy.

One action Congress should take immediately is to pass a comprehensive energy bill, which I proposed more than 2 years ago. Our entire economy depends on steady, affordable supplies of energy. We must encourage conservation, promote efficient technology, modernize our electricity grid, and increase energy production here at home.

In the closing months of this year, Congress should also complete the vital work of strengthening and modernizing Medicare. The best way to provide our seniors with modern medicine, including prescription drug coverage and better preventative care, is to give them more choices under Medicare. When seniors have options, health plans will compete for their business by offering better coverage at affordable price. American seniors are counting on these reforms. I look forward to signing them into law.

Finally, the United States Senate must step up to serious constitutional responsibilities. I've nominated many distinguished and highly qualified Americans to fill vacancies on the Federal district and circuit courts. Because of a small group of Senators is willfully obstructing the process, some of these nominees have been denied up-or-down votes for months, even years. More than one-third of my nominees for the circuit courts are still awaiting a vote. The needless delays in the system are harming the administration of justice, and they are deeply unfair to the nominees themselves. The Senate Judiciary Committee should give a prompt and fair hearing to every single nominee and send every nomination to the Senate floor for an up-or-down vote.

Finally, of course, we are monitoring the fires in California. FEMA Director Brown is in the State. I express my deep concerns and sympathies for those whose lives have been hurt badly by these fires. The Federal Government is working closely with the State Government to provide resources necessary to help the brave firefighters do their duty.

With that, I'll be glad to answer some questions, starting with Terry Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Terrorist Attacks in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, you just spoke about the suicide bombers in Iraq as being desperate. But as yesterday's attacks show, they're also increasingly successful and seem to be trying to send a warning to institutions like the police and the Red Cross not to cooperate with the United States. Has the United States been able to identify who's behind this surge of attacks,

where they come from, and how to stop them?

The President. Yes. I think it's a very interesting point you make in your question, "They're trying to send a warning." Basically, what they're trying to do is cause people to run. They want to kill and create chaos. That's the nature of a terrorist. That's what terrorists do. They commit suicide acts against innocent people and then expect people to say, "Well, gosh, we better not try to fight you anymore."

We're trying to determine the nature of who these people were. But I will tell you, I would assume that they're either, or, and probably both Ba'athists and foreign terrorists. The Ba'athists try to create chaos and fear because they realize that a free Iraq will deny them the excessive privileges they had under Saddam Hussein. The foreign terrorists are trying to create conditions of fear and retreat because they fear a free and peaceful state in the midst of a part of the world where terror has found recruits, that freedom is exactly what terrorists fear the most.

And so I—as I said yesterday, we will not be—I said today again, they're not going to intimidate America, and they're not going to intimidate the brave Iraqis who are actively participating in securing the freedom of their country.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Syria and Iran

Q. Mr. President, if there are foreign terrorists involved, why aren't Syria and Iran being held accountable?

The President. Yes. Well, we're working closely with those countries to let them know that we expect them to enforce borders, prevent people from coming across borders if, in fact, we catch them doing that. The coalition forces have stepped up border patrol efforts. There are now more Iraqis patrolling the border. We are mindful of the fact that some might want to come into Iraq to attack and to create conditions of fear and chaos, and that's why General Abizaid, in his briefing to me yesterday, talked about the additional troops we have on the borders. And that is why it is important that we step up training for Iraqis, border patrol agents, so they can enforce their own borders.

John [John King, Cable News Network].

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

Q. Mr. President, thank you. As you know, the Chairman of the Commission investigating the September 11th attacks wants documents from the White House and said this week that he might have to use subpoena power. You have said there's some national security concerns about turning over some of those documents to people outside of the executive branch. Will you turn them over, or can you at least outline for the American people what you think is a reasonable compromise so that the Commission learns what it needs to know and you protect national security, if you think it's that important?

The President. Yes. It is important for me to protect national security. You're talking about the Presidential daily brief. It's important for the writers of the Presidential daily brief to feel comfortable that the documents will never be politicized and/or unnecessarily exposed for public purview. I—and so, therefore, the kind of the first statements out of this administration were very protective of the Presidential prerogatives of the past and to protect the right for other Presidents, future Presidents, to have a good Presidential daily brief.

Now, having said that, I am—we want to work with Chairman Kean and Vice Chairman Hamilton. And I believe we can reach a proper accord to protect the integrity of the daily brief process and, at the same time, allow them a chance to take a look and see what was in the—certain—the daily briefs that they would like to see.

Q. Do you need to bring them here so that the Chairman and Vice Chairman can see them——

The President. Well, we're working out—we're working out the procedures. My only point is, I do want to be helpful to Chairman Kean and Lee Hamilton. These are men of integrity. They're people who understand the process. They know the importance of the Presidential daily brief. They know the importance of the daily brief to future Presidents. And therefore, I think they will be mindful of the need to gather evidence and, at the same time, protect the capacity for

Presidents to get unfettered, real, good intelligence.

Norah [Norah O'Donnell, NBC News].

U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln Remarks on Iraq

Q. Mr. President, if I may take you back to May 1st when you stood on the U.S.S. *Lincoln* under a huge banner that said, "Mission Accomplished." At that time you declared major combat operations were over, but since that time there have been over 1,000 wounded, many of them amputees who are recovering at Walter Reed, 217 killed in action since that date. Will you acknowledge now that you were premature in making those remarks?

The President. Norah, I think you ought to look at my speech. I said, "Iraq's a dangerous place, and we've got hard work to do. There's still more to be done." And we had just come off a very successful military operation. I was there to thank the troops.

The "Mission Accomplished" sign, of course, was put up by the members of the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*, saying that their mission was accomplished. I know it was attributed somehow to some ingenious advance man from my staff—they weren't that ingenious, by the way.

But my statement was a clear statement, basically recognizing that this phase of the war for Iraq was over and there was a lot of dangerous work. And it's proved to be right. It is dangerous in Iraq. It's dangerous in Iraq because there are people who can't stand the thought of a free and peaceful Iraq. It is dangerous in Iraq because there are some who believe that we're soft, that the will of the United States can be shaken by suiciders and—suiciders who are willing to drive up to a Red Cross center, a center of international help and aid and comfort, and just kill.

It's the same mentality, by the way, that attacked us on September the 11th, 2001: "We'll just destroy innocent life and watch the great United States and their friends and allies crater in the face of hardship." It's the exact same mentality. And Iraq is a part of the war on terror. I said it's a central front, a new front in the war on terror, and that's exactly what it is. And that's why it's important for us to be tough and strong and diligent.

Our strategy in Iraq is to have our strike forces ready and capable to move quickly as we gather actionable intelligence. That's how you deal with terrorists. Remember, these are people that are willing to hide in societies and kill randomly. And therefore, the best way to deal with them is to harden targets, harden assets as best as you can. That means blockades and inspection spots. And as you noticed yesterday, one fellow tried to—was done in as he tried to conduct a suicide mission. In other words, an Iraqi policeman did their job but as well—that we've got to make sure that not only do we harden targets but that we get actionable intelligence to intercept the missions before they begin. That means more Iraqis involved in the intelligence-gathering systems in their country so that they are active participants in securing the country from further harm.

Remember, the action in Iraq was—to get rid of Saddam Hussein was widely supported by the Iraqi people. And the actions that we're taking to improve their country are supported by the Iraqi people. And it's going to be very important for the Iraqi people to play an active role in fighting off the few who are trying to destroy the hopes of the many. You've heard me say that before. That's just kind of the motto of the terrorists. It's the way they operate.

Plante [Bill Plante, CBS News].

U.S. Strategy in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, in—thank you. In recent weeks, you and your White House team have made a concerted effort to put a positive spin on progress in Iraq. At the same time, there's been a much more somber assessment in private, as with Secretary Rumsfeld's memo. And there are people out there who don't believe that the administration is leveling with them about the difficulty and scope of the problem in Iraq.

The President. Yes, I can't put it any more plainly: Iraq is a dangerous place. That's leveling. It is a dangerous place. What I was saying is, there's more than just terrorist attacks that are taking place in Iraq. There's schools opening. There are hospitals opening. The electricity—the capacity to deliver

electricity to the Iraqi people is back up to prewar levels. We're nearly 2 million barrels of oil a day being produced for the Iraqi people. I was just saying we've got to look at the whole picture, that what the terrorists would like is for people to focus only on the conditions which create fear, and that is the death and the toll being taken.

No, Iraq is a dangerous place, Bill. And I can't put it any more bluntly than that. I know it's a dangerous place. And I also know our strategy to rout them out—which is to encourage better intelligence and get more Iraqis involved and have our strike teams ready to move—is the right strategy. People are constantly taking a look at the enemy.

In other words, one of the hallmarks of this operation in Iraq as well as Afghanistan was the flexibility we've given our commanders. You might remember the "stuck in the desert" scenario that—during the dust storms, that we're advancing to Baghdad and all of a sudden there was—we got stuck. But remember that at that period of time, it also became apparent that Tommy Franks had the flexibility necessary to adjust based upon, in this case, weather conditions and what he found.

And that's exactly what's taking place on a regular basis inside of Iraq. The strategy remains the same. The tactics to respond to more suiciders driving cars will alter on the ground—more checkpoints, whatever they decide—how to harden targets will change. And so we're constantly looking at the enemy and adjusting. And Iraq's dangerous, and it's dangerous because terrorists want us to leave. And we're not leaving.

Let's see, Terry [Terry Moran, ABC News], then you, Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

Reform of the Palestinian Authority/ Israeli Security Fence

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President, your policies on the Middle East seem so far to have produced pretty meager results as the violence between Israelis and Palestinians——

The President. Major or meager?

Q. Meager.

The President. Oh, okay.

Q. Meager.

The President. Meager.

Q. ——as the violence between Israelis and Palestinians continues. And as you heard last week from Muslim leaders in Indonesia, your policies are seen as biased towards Israel, and I'd like to ask you about that. The Government of Israel continues to build settlements in occupied territories, and it continues to build the security fence, which Palestinians see as stealing their land. You've criticized these moves mildly a couple of times, but you've never taken any concrete action to back up your words on that. Will you?

The President. My policy in the Middle East is pretty clear. We are for a two-state solution. We want there to be a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel. Now, in order to achieve a two-state solution, there needs to be a focused effort by all concerned parties to fight off terror. There are terrorists in the Middle East willing to kill to make sure that a Palestinian state doesn't emerge. It's essential that there be a focused effort to fight off terror.

Abu Mazen came here at the White House—you were here. You witnessed the press conference. He pledged a focused and concerted effort to fight terror so that we could have a Palestinian state emerge. And he asked for help, which we were willing to provide. Unfortunately, he is no longer in power. He was eased out of power. And I do not see the same commitment to fight terror from the old guard. And therefore, it's going to be very hard to move the peace process forward until there's a focused effort by all parties to assume their responsibilities.

You asked about the fence. I have said the fence is a problem to the extent that the fence is a opportunity to make it difficult for a Palestinian state to emerge. There is a difference between security and land acquisition, and we have made our views clear on that issue.

I've also spoken to Prime Minister Sharon in the past about settlement activities. And the reason why—that we have expressed concern about settlement activities is because we want the conditions for a Palestinian state on the ground to be positive, that when the Palestinians finally get people that are willing

to fight off terror, the ground must be right so that a state can emerge, a peaceful state.

This administration is prepared to help the Palestinians develop an economy. We're prepared to help the long-suffering Palestinian people. But the long-suffering Palestinian people need leadership that is willing to do what is necessary to enable a Palestinian state to come forth.

Stretch.

Iraqi Support for U.S. Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Senior U.S. intelligence officials on the ground in Iraq have estimated that we have, at most, 6 months to restore order there and quell the violence, or else we risk losing the support of the Iraqi populace, which you've said many times we need to make this mission work. Do you share that sense of pessimism? And if not, why not? And in addition, are you considering the possibility of possibly adding more U.S. troops to the forces already on the ground there to help restore order?

The President. That's a decision by John Abizaid. He makes that—General Abizaid makes the decision as to whether or not he needs more troops. I've constantly asked the Secretary of Defense, as well as when I was visiting with General Abizaid, does he have what it takes to do his mission? He told me he does.

Secondly, I believe the Iraqi people are appreciative of the reconstruction efforts. The small-business owners, who are all of a sudden beginning to realize there's a market developing, appreciate that. The mothers who send their children to the over 1,500 schools we've refurbished appreciate that. There are going to be new textbooks coming which no longer glorify the tyrant Saddam Hussein but glorify basic education or at least promote basic education. They will be there. I think the people of Iraq appreciate what is taking place inside the country.

And what we, of course, are going to do is implement the strategy, which is encourage Iraqis to help deal with the security issues. And that's what's taking place. We're getting better intelligence, more actionable intelligence, and the Iraqi citizens themselves are willing to fight off these terrorists. If you look at some of the brave actions by the Iraqi police, people who've died for the future of their country, you know what I'm talking about. There are people willing to sacrifice for the future of their country, the Iraqi citizen—the Iraqi citizens willing to sacrifice for the future of their country.

Rosen [James Rosen, FOX News].

Flexibility in Foreign Policy

Q. Thank you, sir. Perhaps the clearest, strongest message you have ever sent from any podium has been what you like to call the Bush doctrine, that is to say, if you feed a terrorist, if you clothe a terrorist, if you harbor a terrorist, you are a terrorist. And I'd like to follow up on the Middle East. You have noted that Yasser Arafat is compromised by terror. Condi Rice has said he "cavorts with terror." You've both noted that he is an obstacle to peace. He has, in political terms, choked off your last two Palestinian interlocutors. What is it that prevents you from concluding that he is, in fact, under your own definition of what a terrorist is, a terrorist and should be dealt with in the same way that you've dealt with Saddam Hussein and Charles Taylor?

The President. Yes. Well, not every action requires military action, Jim. We—as you noticed, for example in North Korea, we've chosen to put together a multinational strategy to deal with Mr. Kim Chong-il. Not every action requires military action. As a matter of fact, military action is the very last resort for us. And a reminder: When you mentioned Saddam Hussein, I just wanted to remind you that the Saddam Hussein military action took place after innumerable United Nations Security Council resolutions were passed, not one, two, or three but a lot. And so this Nation is very reluctant to use military force. We try to enforce doctrine peacefully or through alliances or multinational forums, and we will continue to do so.

Yes, Elisabeth [Elisabeth Bumiller, New York Times].

Iraq Stabilization Group

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You recently put Condoleezza Rice, your National Security Adviser, in charge of the management of the administration's Iraq policy. What has effectively changed since she's been in

charge? And the second question, can you promise a year from now that you will have reduced the number of troops in Iraq?

The President. The second question is a trick question, so I won't answer it. The first question was Condoleezza Rice. Her job is to coordinate interagency. She's doing a fine job of coordinating interagency. She's doing what—the role of the National Security Adviser is to not only provide good advice to the President, which she does on a regular basis—I value her judgment and her intelligence—but her job is also to deal interagency and to help unstick things that may get stuck, is the best way to put it. She's an unsticker. And—is she listening? Okay, well, she's doing a fine job.

Dana [Dana Milbank, Washington Post].

Disclosure of CIA Employee's Identity

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You have said that you were eager to find out whether somebody in the White House leaked the identity of an undercover CIA agent. Many experts in such investigations say you could find out if there was a leaker in the White House within hours if you asked all staff members to sign affidavits denying involvement. Why not take that step?

The President. Yes. Well, the best person to do that, Dana, so that the—or the best group of people to do that so that you believe the answer is the professionals at the Justice Department, and they're moving forward with the investigation. It's a criminal investigation. It is an important investigation. I'd like to know if somebody in my White House did leak sensitive information. As you know, I've been outspoken on leaks. And whether they happened in the White House or happened in the administration or happened on Capitol Hill, it is a—they can be very damaging. And so this investigation is ongoing and—by professionals who do this for a living, and I hope they—I'd like to know.

Judy [Judy Keen, USA Today].

Partial-Birth Abortion Legislation/Terri Schiavo Case

Q. Sir, in your last campaign, you said that the American public was not ready for a complete ban on abortion. You're about to sign legislation that will ban a certain abortion procedure known as partial-birth. Do you believe that the climate has changed since the last campaign and all abortions should be banned? And do you believe your brother made the correct decision in Florida when he intervened in the case of a woman who had been ordered by the courts to be taken off life support?

The President. Yes, I believe my brother made the right decision. Yes, I'll sign the ban on partial-birth abortion. And no, I don't think the culture has changed to the extent that the American people or the Congress would totally ban abortions.

Let's see. Who's—Mark Smith [Associated Press Radio], a radio man.

Iraqi Aid Legislation

Q. Thank you very much, sir, for including our radio folks here.

The President. A face for radio. [*Laughter*]

Q. I wish I could say that was the first time you told me that, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. The first time I did it to a national audience, though. [*Laughter*]

Q. Actually it was my wife the last time. [*Laughter*]

Your package of reconstruction aid, sir, that the Congress, as you point out, is considering—that's an emergency package, meaning it's not budgeted for. Put another way, that means the American taxpayer and future generations of American taxpayers are saddled with that. Why should they be saddled with that? I know you don't want the Iraqis to be saddled with large amounts of debt, but why should future generations of Americans have that——

The President. Well, first of all, it's a one-time expenditure, as you know, and secondly, because a secure—a peaceful and free Iraq is essential to the security, future security of America.

First step was to remove Saddam Hussein because he was a threat, a gathering threat, as I think I put it. And secondly is to make sure that in the aftermath of removing Saddam Hussein, that we have a free and peaceful country in the midst of a very troubled region. It's an historic opportunity. And I will continue to make that case to the American people. It's a chance to secure—have a more

secure future for our children. It's essential we get it right.

You know, I was struck by the fact when I was in Japan recently that my relations with Prime Minister Koizumi are very close and personal. And I was thinking about what would happen if, in a post-World War II era, we hadn't won the peace as well as the war. I mean, would I have had the same relationship with Mr. Koizumi? Would I be able to work closely on crucial relations? I doubt it. I doubt it.

In other words, we've got very close alliances now as a result of not only winning a war but doing the right things in the postwar period. And I believe a free and peaceful Iraq will help effect change in that neighborhood. And that's why I've asked the American people to foot the tab for $20 billion of reconstruction. Others are stepping up as well: $13 billion out of the Madrid Conference, which may be just only a beginning.

And by the way, in the Madrid Conference, most of the money came from the World Bank and the IMF, which are lending institutions, as you know. The Iraqi oil revenues, excess Iraqi oil revenues, coupled with private investment, should make up the difference to fund the estimates of what the World Bank thought was necessary to help that country.

Q. Another radio? Another radio, Mr. President?

The President. Excuse me—particularly since you interrupted me, no.

And that's what the World Bank estimated it would cost, and it looks like we'll be able to help the Iraqis get on their feet and have a viable marketplace.

Bill Douglas [William Douglas, Newsday].

Reform of the Palestinian Authority/Iraq

Q. Speaking of—in speaking on Abu Mazen, do you feel this administration did everything it could to help him out with his situation?

The President. Yes, I do.

Q. And secondly, on Iraq, do you feel that the attacks that have happened recently will discourage some countries to contribute troops or manpower?

The President. Good question. I hope not. That's what the terrorists want. They want countries to say, "Oh, gosh, well, we better not send anybody there because somebody might get hurt." That's precisely what they're trying to do. And that's why it's important for this Nation and our other coalition partners to stand our ground, to improve our intelligence, to move quickly when we find good intelligence, and to bring people to justice.

The terrorists rely on the death of innocent people to create the conditions of fear that, therefore, will cause people to lose their will. That's their strategy, and it's a pretty clear strategy to me. And this country will stay the course. We'll do our job, and it's to our interest that we do our job. It's in our interest we do our job for a free world. A free Iraq is essential to creating conditions of peace. See, that's what this is all about. This is, how do we achieve a peaceful tomorrow? How do we do our duty for our children and our grandchildren?

We must never forget the lessons of September the 11th. The terrorists will strike, and they will kill innocent life—not only in front of a Red Cross headquarters. They will strike and kill in America too. We are at war. I said right after September the 11th, this would be a different kind of war; sometimes you'd see action, and sometimes you wouldn't. It's a different kind of war than what we're used to. And Iraq is a front on the war on terror, and we will win this particular battle in the war on terror.

And it's dangerous, and it's tough. And at the same time that we're confronting the danger, we're also helping rebuild a society. We put in a new currency, in place. For the financial types who are here, you'll understand how difficult that assignment is. And yet it seems to be going well. It's an achievement that is a very important achievement for the future of Iraq. A stable currency, a new currency, a currency without the picture of the dictator or the tyrant or the torturer, however you want to define him, is important for the future. And that's taking place. There's a market developing. There are women-owned small businesses now beginning to flourish in Iraq. And there's positive things happening in the midst of the danger.

And I hope that countries, when they take a look at the situation there, understand the

nature of the terrorists and the strategy of the terrorists, and don't back off.

Tom Hamburger [Wall Street Journal], you got a question? If not, make one up.

Meeting With Religious Leaders in Indonesia/Lieutenant General Boykin

Q. Mr. President, tonight you're meeting with Muslim leaders——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——at an Iftaar dinner, and I wondered if you could tell us your reaction when you encountered Muslim leaders in Indonesia. Were you surprised at the hostility they expressed towards the United States and towards your policies, both in the Middle East—and also, I understand that some of them brought up specific comments made by General Boykin——

The President. Yes, they did.

Q. ——and I wondered if you would address those comments and whether you think that General Boykin ought to be disciplined or resign.

The President. Sure, I appreciate that. First, the characterization of hostility, that just wasn't the case. It was not a hostile meeting, nor did I sense hostility. Quite the contrary, I—the five leaders I met with were appreciative for a chance to express their views. But it was a very positive meeting, very hopeful.

Two things that came out of there that I think will interest you: One was that—the question was, "Why do Americans think Muslims are terrorists?" That was the universal question from the three Muslim leaders. And my answer was, "That's not what Americans think. Americans think terrorists are evil people who have hijacked a great religion." That's why Mr. Boykin's comments were—General Boykin's comments don't reflect the administration's comments. And by the way, there's an IG investigation going on inside the Defense Department now about that. He doesn't reflect my point of view or the view of this administration.

Our war is not against the Muslim faith. As a matter of fact, as you mentioned, tonight we're celebrating the Iftaar dinner with Muslim leaders. But we welcome Muslims in our country. In America, we love the fact that we are a society in which people can pray openly or not pray at all, for that matter. And I made that point to the Muslim leaders.

Secondly, the question was about the Middle Eastern policy. "Why is your policy so slanted toward Israel," was the question. And I informed them I was the first President ever to have advocated a Palestinian state. I did so at the United Nations. I also informed them that in order for a Palestinian state to go forward, as I told Terry, there must be a focused, concerted effort to destroy the terrorist networks who are trying to prevent a Palestinian state from emerging—which requires good, strong, capable leadership, is what it requires.

And so those were the two main points that were brought up. There was concern about General Boykin. It seemed like to me that we've got a challenge to make sure that people in countries like Indonesia understand the nature of the American people, that how we think is going to be an important part of good diplomacy in the long run, that we've got to fight off the imagery of a society which condemns entire swaths of people because of the acts of a few, which is not the way we are.

And I was pleased to get the opportunity to make that case to the leaders that were there. It was a very cordial and good discussion, and I'm going to drop them a note thanking them for showing up and giving me a chance to talk about the America I know and love.

Bill [Bill Sammons, Washington Times].

Aid Package for Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. After more than a year of being accused by your critics of waging war for oil, is it frustrating to now hear some of those same critics demand that you essentially take that oil in the form of loans instead of grants for reconstruction?

The President. Well, that's exactly the point I made to the Members of Congress who have come here to the White House to talk about loans or grants. I said, "Let's don't burden Iraq with loans. The only thing they'll be able to repay their loans with is oil." And hopefully, we'll get a good solution out of the Congress on this issue. We're making progress. We're working hard with the Members to make the case that it's very important

for us not to saddle Iraq with a bunch of debt early in its—in the emergence of a market-oriented economy, an economy that has been wrecked by Mr. Saddam Hussein. I mean, he just destroyed their economy and destroyed their infrastructure, destroyed their education system, destroyed their medical system, all to keep himself in power. He was the ultimate——

Q. [*Inaudible*]—on the part of your critics?

The President. No, that's my answer there.

Hillman [G. Robert Hillman, Dallas Morning News].

Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You have repeatedly urged Americans to have patience when they view postwar operations in Iraq. But isn't there a limit to American patience, particularly in an election year, when your foreign policies——

The President. Interesting question.

Q. ——will be the center of debate?

The President. Well, I think the American people are patient during an election year, because they tend to be able to differentiate between politics and reality. As a matter of fact, the American people are—the electorate is a heck of a lot smarter than most politicians.

And the only thing I know to do is just keep telling people what I think is right for the country and stand my—stand on what I believe, and that's what I'm going to do. And there's no question politics can—will create—get a lot of noise and a lot of balloon drops and a lot of hot air. I'll probably be right in the mix of it, by the way. But I will defend my record at the appropriate time and look forward to it. I'll say that the world is more peaceful and more free under my leadership and America is more secure. And that will be the—that will be how I'll begin describing our foreign policy.

Ed [Ed Chen, Los Angeles Times], and then Bob [Bob Deans, Cox Newspapers], and then I'm going to go eat lunch.

Q. Are we invited? [*Laughter*]

The President. It depends on your question.

Q. Fair enough. Mr. President, you talked about politics. For weeks, if not months now, when questions have been posed to members of your team, those questions have been dismissed as politics, and a time will come later to address those questions. You, indeed, have said that yourself. How can the public differentiate between reality and politics when you and your campaign have raised over $80 million and you're saying that the season has not started?

The President. Yes. You're not invited to lunch. [*Laughter*]

Look, we are—we're arming, raising money to wage a campaign. And there will be an appropriate time for me to engage politically; that is, in the public forum. Right now, I'm—yes, no question, I'm going out to our friends and supporters and saying, "Would you mind contributing to the campaign for the year '04?" To me, that's—and that's a part of politics, no question about it. And as you know, these are open forums; you're able to come and listen to what I have to say.

To me, there's a difference between that and actually engaging potential opponents in a public discourse in a debate, and there will be ample time for that. There will be ample time to differentiate views and to defend records in the face of political criticism. And I know that the campaign has started for some, in terms of the public debate from a political perspective. It just hasn't for me yet.

And we'll continue to lay the groundwork for the campaign. I mean, there's organizing efforts going on in States right now. There are people being put in place that are going to work hard to turn out the vote. I mean, after all, the election is nearly a year away. There will be—we're preparing different strategies in order to run a viable campaign.

But I'm focused on security of the American people, working with Congress to get a Medicare bill and an energy bill, and will continue to use the platform I have to urge passage of those two pieces of legislation. As a matter of fact, tomorrow I'll be giving a speech on Medicare, and the next day I'll be talking about energy and will continue to talk about job creation. But in terms of the balloon drops and all that business, it's going

to take—it will be a little while for me to be catching the confetti, as they say.

Bob, last question.

Iraqi Weapons Program

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President——

The President. Fine-looking vest, fine-looking vest.

Q. Thank you, sir. [*Laughter*] It's inspired by some of the attire from your APEC colleagues last week. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sir, David Kay's interim report cited substantial evidence of a secretive weapons program. But the absence of any substantial stores of chemical or biological weapons there have caused some people, even who supported the war, to feel somehow betrayed. Can you explain to those Americans, sir, whether you were surprised those weapons haven't turned up, why they haven't turned up, and whether you feel that your administration's credibility has been affected in any way by that?

The President. David Kay's report said that Saddam Hussein was in material breach of 1441, which would have been casus belli. In other words, he had a weapons program. He's disguised a weapons program. He had ambitions. And I felt the report was a very interesting first report—because he's still looking for—to find the truth.

And the American people know that Saddam Hussein was a gathering danger, as I said. And he was a gathering danger, and the world is safer as a result for us removing him from power—"us" being more than the United States, of course—Britain and other countries who were willing to participate, Poland, Australia, all willing to join up to remove this danger.

And the intelligence that said he had a weapons system was intelligence that had been used by a multinational agency, the U.N., to pass resolutions. It had been used by my predecessor to conduct bombing raids. It was intelligence gathered from a variety of sources that clearly said Saddam Hussein was a threat.

And given the attacks of September the 11th, it was—we needed to enforce U.N. resolution for the security of the world. And we did. We took action based upon good, solid intelligence. It was the right thing to do to make America more secure and the world more peaceful.

And David Kay continues to ferret out the truth. This is a man—Saddam Hussein is a man who hid programs and weapons for years. He's a master at hiding things. And so David Kay will continue his search, but one of the things that he first found was that there is clear violation of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441. Material breach, they call it in the diplomatic circles. Casus belli, it means a—that would have been a cause for war. In other words, he said it's dangerous.

And we were right to enforce U.N. resolutions as well. It's important for the U.N. to be a credible organization. You're not credible if you issue resolutions and then nothing happens. Credibility comes when you say something is going to happen and then it does happen. And in order to keep the peace, it's important for there to be credibility in this world, credibility on the side of freedom and hope.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:15 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Mike Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, and Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Thomas H. Kean, Chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, Vice Chairman, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission); former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Lt. Gen. William G. Boykin, USA, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; and David Kay, CIA Special Advisor for Strategy Regarding Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs. The President also referred to Gov. Jeb Bush's order on October 21 for doctors to resume tube feeding of Terri Schiavo, a brain-damaged Florida patient. Reporters referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and former President Charles Taylor of Liberia.

Remarks at the Iftaar Dinner

October 28, 2003

Good evening. *Ramadan Kareem.* Welcome to the White House. I'm pleased to host all of you, our distinguished guests, during this blessed month of Ramadan.

For Muslims in America and around the world, this holy time is set aside for prayer and fasting. It is also a good time for people of all faiths to reflect on the values we hold common, love of family, gratitude to God, and a commitment to religious freedom. America is a land of many faiths, and we honor and welcome and value the Muslim faith.

I appreciate Secretary Powell being here today, the great Secretary of State of America. There are members of my administration scattered amongst you, and I appreciate them coming. I particularly want to thank the Secretary of Energy, Spence Abraham, for being here as well.

I appreciate Your Highness Sheik Hamdan bin Zayed, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for the United Arab Emirates, for coming. I want to thank all the Ambassadors who are here and representatives of the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We're honored you're here tonight. I want to thank the American Muslim leaders who are here with us today. I appreciate my friends coming. I particularly want to thank Imam Faizul Khan, who will lead us in prayer.

According to the teachings of Islam, Ramadan commemorates the revelation of God's word in the Holy Koran to the prophet Mohammed. In this season, Muslims come together to remember their dependence on God and to show charity to their neighbors. Fasting during Ramadan helps Muslims focus on God's greatness, to grow in virtue, and cultivate compassion toward those who live in poverty and hunger.

The charity, discipline, and sacrifice practiced during Ramadan in America makes America a better, more compassionate country. The family gatherings that break the fast at the end of each day enrich our community this time of year are a blessing in many lives, and they're a blessing to our Nation.

As we gather during this season, we are mindful of the struggles of the men and women around the world who long for the same peace and tolerance we enjoy here in America. Brave American and coalition troops are laboring every day to defend our liberty and to spread freedom and peace, particularly to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The citizens of those countries have survived decades of tyranny and fear. Now, new leaders are emerging. They're emerging in Iraq in the form of medical workers and teachers and citizens of all backgrounds who are coming together to guide their country's future. They're moving toward self-government and practicing their faith as they see fit.

We will continue to support the people of Iraq and Afghanistan as they build a more hopeful future. And we will not allow criminals or terrorists to stop the advance of freedom. Terrorists who use religion to justify the taking of innocent life have no home in any faith.

As we defend liberty and justice abroad, we must always honor those values here at home. America rejects all forms of ethnic and religious bigotry. We welcome the values of every responsible citizen, no matter the land of their birth. And we will always protect the most basic human freedom, the freedom to worship God without fear.

Islam is a religion that brings hope and comfort to good people across America and around the world. Tonight we honor the contributions of Muslims and the tradition of Islam by hosting this Iftaar dinner at the White House.

I wish you all a very blessed Ramadan, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Imam Faizul Khan, Islamic Center of the Washington Area.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Michael O. Leavitt as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

October 28, 2003

I am pleased the Senate acted today to confirm Governor Mike Leavitt as my new Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Governor Leavitt is an exceptional leader who shares my commitment to reaching out across partisan lines to get things done. I know he will work closely with me to build upon my administration's initiatives to make our air and water cleaner, protect the land, and use technology to improve our environment while our economy grows and creates jobs. I thank Chairman Inhofe and Senator Reid for their leadership in ensuring Governor Leavitt's confirmation.

Statement on Signing the Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act

October 28, 2003

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1474, the "Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act." This Act is intended to update and modernize the Nation's check payment and collection systems. Section 16(b) of the Act purports to require executive branch officials to submit to the Congress recommendations for legislative action. The executive branch shall construe section 16(b) in a manner consistent with the President's authority under the Recommendations Clause of the Constitution to submit for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President shall judge necessary or expedient.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 28, 2003.

NOTE: H.R. 1474, approved October 28, was assigned Public Law No. 108–100.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocol Amending the Sri Lanka-United States Taxation Convention

October 28, 2003

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income signed at Colombo on March 14, 1985, together with an exchange of notes, signed at Washington on September 20, 2002 (the "Protocol"). I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State concerning the Protocol.

The Protocol would amend the Convention to make it similar to tax treaties between the United States and other developing nations. The Convention would provide maximum rates of tax to be applied to various types of income and protection from double taxation of income. The Convention, as amended by the Protocol, also provides for resolution of disputes and sets forth rules making its benefits unavailable to residents that are engaged in treaty shopping.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Protocol in conjunction with the Convention, and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 28, 2003.

Remarks on Medicare Reform Legislation

October 29, 2003

The President. Thank you all for coming. Good morning. Welcome to the White House. I'm glad you're here. We're meeting at an historic time, and the reason why is,

after years of debate and deadlock, the Congress is on the verge of Medicare reform. And that's important. Prescription drug coverage for our seniors is within reach. Expanded coverage for preventive medicine and therapy is within our reach. More health care choices for seniors are within our reach.

Though a few difficult issues remain, the Congress has made tremendous progress. And now is the time to finish the work. The Congress needs to finalize legislation that brings our seniors the best of modern medicine. I want to sign the legislation into law before the year is out.

And the point person for this administration in working with the Congress to move the legislation along is Tommy Thompson, our Secretary. He has done a fabulous job. If he looks tired, it's because he's showing up early—[*laughter*]—and going to bed late, working for the seniors of America.

I want to thank Tom Scully, who is the Administrator—Scully is the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. I appreciate you coming.

We've got other members of my administration who are concerned about the health of all Americans, including our seniors: Rich Carmona, the Surgeon General—thank you, General; the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Julie Gerberding. Thank you, Julie, for being here. It's good to see you. The Director of the National Institutes of Health, Elias Zerhouni—Dr. Zerhouni is with us.

We've got a lot of other important people here, too many to name. But I have just come from a roundtable discussion with some seniors and some people involved in the process, a corporate executive who is from Caterpillar, who assures me that corporations have no intention of—if there's a Medicare reform bill signed by me, corporations have no intention to what they call dump retirees into a system they don't want to be dumped into. And I appreciate that commitment by Rich Lavin. Thank you for bringing that up.

I want to thank Jim Parkel from Fairfield, Connecticut, who is the president of the AARP, for being here. I appreciate my friend Jim "Budda" Martin for being here today. He's very much concerned about the health of our citizens. And thank you all for coming. This is an important moment, as I said.

You see, the stories we heard remind Tommy and me that seniors depend upon Medicare and that the Medicare program is a basic trust that must be upheld throughout the generations. What we're talking about is trust, can people trust their Government to bring a modern system of health to our seniors. We made a commitment at the Federal level to provide good health care for seniors, and we must uphold that commitment. That's what we're here to discuss today, how best to do that.

Each of the seniors that we talked about—talked to understands that the system needs improvement, that Medicare needs to be modernized. I'm determined to meet this responsibility.

And let me share some of the stories we heard right quick. Neil LaGrow is with us. Neil, thank you. He takes 10 medications, about $525 a month he spends. He pays for it all. Because of these costs, he continues to work, although I must say he didn't complain about it. [*Laughter*] He likes to work. We need our seniors working, by the way, in terms of making contributions to our society. I'm not talking about being on the factory floor for 8 hours, but I am talking about passing on values from one generation to the next or helping in different community activities as you see fit. It's a really important contribution to our country. Neil does that. If he gets some help with his prescription drug costs, it's going to make his retirement a little easier. [*Laughter*] Isn't that right?

Mr. LaGrow. That's very right.

The President. Seniors should be able to plan their retirement better. The best way to do so is to make sure that they can afford the medicines necessary to keep them healthy. That's what we're talking about in this bill.

Joan Fogg is with us, from Richmond. She and her husband, Walter, are on Medicare, and they pay a goodly portion for drugs right out of their own pocket. "When we think we're getting down on money, we go ahead and cut the medication in half." That's what she said. "That's not the way it should be, but we deal with it. We have to." Joan is right, that's not the way it should be. That's

why we want to modernize the system. That's why we want to work better for all seniors.

Most American seniors and people with disabilities are grateful for the current Medicare system. Yet they understand the system has problems. Our job is to address those problems. We should carefully correct the problems. That's what we're elected to do. Medicare was created at a time when medicine consisted mostly of house calls and surgery and long hospital stays. Now modern medicine includes preventative care, outpatient procedures, and at-home care. Life is changing. Medicare is not.

Many invasive surgeries are now unnecessary because of miraculous new prescription drugs. Most Americans have coverage for this new medicine. Three-quarters of seniors have some kind of drug coverage. But seniors relying exclusively on Medicare do not have coverage for most prescription drugs and many forms of preventative care. This is not good. It's not cost-effective medicine.

Medicare today will pay for extended hospital stays for ulcer surgery, at a cost of about $28,000 per patient. And that's important coverage. Yet Medicare will not pay for the drugs that eliminate the cause of ulcers, drugs that cost about $500 a year. So we're going to be talking about cost savings; there's an example of cost savings.

Medicare will pay many of the costs to treat a stroke, including bills from hospital and rehab center, doctors, home health aides, and outpatient care. Those costs can run more than $100,000. And this is essential coverage. Yet Medicare does not cover the blood-thinning drugs that could prevent strokes, drugs that cost less than $1,000 a year.

The Medicare system has many strengths. Yet it is often slow to respond to dramatic changes in medicine. It took more than a decade and an act of Congress to get Medicare to cover preventative breast cancer screenings. It took 10 years and then an act of Congress to change the system. That's not a good system. Our seniors should not have to wait for an act of Congress for improvements in their health care.

The best way to provide our seniors with modern medicine, including prescription drug coverage and better preventative care, is to give them better choices under Medicare. If seniors have choices, health plans will compete for their business by offering better coverage at more affordable prices.

The choices we support include the choice of making no change at all. I understand some seniors don't want to change, and that's perfectly sensible. If you're a senior who wants to stay in the current Medicare system, you'll have that option, and you'll gain a prescription drug benefit. That's what the reform does.

If you're a senior who wants enhanced benefits, such as coverage for extended hospital stays or protection against high out-of-pocket expenses, you'll have that choice. If you liked managed care plans, that option will be there. If you're a low-income senior, you will receive extra help each month and more generous coverage, so you can afford a Medicare option that includes prescription drug benefits.

We're applying a basic principle: Seniors should be able to choose the kind of coverage that works best for them, instead of having that choice made by the Government. Every Member of Congress gets to choose a health coverage plan that makes the most sense for them. So does every Federal employee. If this kind of coverage is good enough for the United States Congress, it's good enough for America's seniors.

For seniors without any drug coverage now, these reforms will make a big difference in their lives. In return for a monthly premium of about $35, or a dollar a day, those seniors now without coverage would see their drug bills cut roughly in half. A senior who has no drug coverage now and monthly drug costs of $200 a month would save more than $1,700 on drug costs each year. A senior with monthly drug costs of $800 would save nearly $5,900 on drug costs each year. Those are important savings, help change people's lives in a positive way.

I'm optimistic the House and the Senate negotiators will produce a bill that brings real savings to millions of seniors and real reform to Medicare. Once the legislation is passed, it will take some time to put into place. During this period, we'll provide all seniors with a Medicare-approved drug discount card that saves between 10 to 25 percent off the cost

of their medicines. So they'll have a start to see savings immediately.

Low-income beneficiaries will receive a $600 subsidy along with their discount card to help them purchase their prescription medicines. The legislation Congress passes must make sure that the prescription drug coverage provided to many retirees by their employers is not undermined. That's what Rick and I just discussed. Medicare legislation should encourage employers to continue benefits, while also extending drug coverage to the millions of Medicare beneficiaries who now lack it.

These steps will strengthen Medicare, not only for today's seniors but for tomorrow's retirees. Many workers are counting on Medicare to provide good health care coverage in their retirement. That's what people are counting on. These reforms will give our workers confidence that Medicare will serve them with the very best of modern medicine.

The budget I submitted earlier this year commits an additional $400 billion over 10 years to implement this vision of a stronger Medicare system. We're keeping our commitments to the seniors of today. We must pursue these reforms so that our Medicare system can serve future generations of Americans.

The time to improve our Medicare system has come. Now is the time. I urge America's seniors to speak up, to call and write your representatives to urge them to work out a final bill. Speak up for prescription drug coverage. Speak up for health care choices. Speak up for a modern Medicare system that puts patients and doctors in charge.

I urge the Congress to act quickly, to act this year, not to push this responsibility to the future. We have the opportunity—we have the obligation to give seniors more choices and better benefits. We have come far, and now is the time to finish the job.

Thank you for coming. Appreciate it. Good to see you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 a.m. in Room 450 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Richard P. Lavin, vice president, Human Services Division, Caterpillar Inc.; and Jim Martin, president, 60 Plus Association. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan

October 29, 2003

On November 3, 1997, by Executive Order 13067, the President declared a national emergency with respect to Sudan pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan. Because the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on November 3, 1997, and the measures adopted on that date to deal with that emergency must continue in effect beyond November 3, 2003. Therefore, consistent with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to Sudan.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 29, 2003.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:04 a.m., October 30, 2003]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on October 31.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan

October 29, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date

of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating the Sudan emergency is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 2003, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on October 31, 2002 (67 *Fed. Reg.* 66525).

The crisis between the United States and Sudan constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Sudan that led to the declaration of a national emergency on November 3, 1997, has not been resolved. These actions and policies are hostile to U.S. interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Sudan and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions against Sudan to respond to this threat.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 29, 2003.

Notice—Continuation of Emergency Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction

October 29, 2003

On November 14, 1994, by Executive Order 12938, President Clinton declared a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States posed by the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons (weapons of mass destruction) and the means of delivering such weapons. On July 28, 1998, the President issued Executive Order 13094 to amend Executive Order 12938 to respond more effectively to the worldwide threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering such weapons. Because the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, the national emergency first declared on November 14, 1994, must continue in effect beyond November 14, 2003. Consistent with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12938, as amended.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 29, 2003.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:04 a.m., October 30, 2003]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on October 31.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction

October 29, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. Consistent with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems declared by Executive Order 12938 on November 14, 1994, as amended, is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 2003. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was signed on November 6, 2002, and published in the *Federal Register* on November 12, 2002 (67 *Fed. Reg.* 68493).

Because the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering

them continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, I have determined the national emergency previously declared must continue in effect beyond November 14, 2003.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 29, 2003.

Remarks at the Dedication of the Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship Youth Education Center in Dallas, Texas

October 29, 2003

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. USA! USA! USA!

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. USA! USA! USA!

The President. Zip it. [*Laughter*] Thank you all for coming. It's great to be home. I'm glad to be with people who are transforming a community one heart and one soul at a time. That's what's taking place here, and that's why I'm here.

I want to thank you all for supporting Project Turn Around. I want to thank you for supporting with your resources, with your time, and with your prayers. I want to thank my friend Tony Evans for his leadership. He's what I like to call a social entrepreneur. We've got business entrepreneurs, and this country has got social entrepreneurs—those are people who use their wits and their talents as change agents, as positive change agents.

You can hear Tony on 500 radio stations. You can read 20 of his books. You can listen to his powerful sermons on Sunday. He is a busy man, and one of the advantages of being President is he'll take my phone call. [*Laughter*] And I'm glad he does. I appreciate his advice, and he's got good, sound advice. I appreciate his friendship; he is a loyal friend. And I appreciate his prayers. The greatest gift American people can give a President and his family is prayer, and I want to thank you for that.

Tony and I married well. [*Laughter*] I'm so honored to be with Lois Evans. Thank you very much for your hospitality. And the Evans family, Chrystal and Priscilla as well as Anthony, Jr. Anthony, Jr. was telling me—actually, he's a modest guy, so his dad was telling me—[*laughter*]—that he just got back from cutting a record with Michael W. Smith. I think that's what he said, kind of like that. Well, he was with Michael W. Smith. [*Laughter*] We'll see if the record happens or not. [*Laughter*]

Some of my greatest memories was living in Austin, Texas, and showing up for work at the Capitol. Two members of the legislative branch are here, people who I remember fondly, people who I miss. Senator Royce West and Representative Helen Giddings are with us.

I want you to know that I'm aware that Reverend E.K. Bailey passed, and I send our deepest sympathies to his family and to his congregation. He was a great leader here in the great State of Texas.

I bring up a preacher because I want to thank all the preachers who are here, the pastors, those who shepherd. One pastor who is not here is my friend Jack Graham from Prestonwood Baptist. I bring that up because social entrepreneurs find out ways to leverage resources in a proper way. And what Tony Evans has done with Pastor Jack Graham is to start an urban-suburban partnership. It's an opportunity for suburban churches to participate in salvaging lives and making lives better in neighborhoods where most members of the congregation will never go. It's a chance for urban and suburban churches to work on racial reconciliation. Social entrepreneurs think about ways to make societies a better place. And I want to thank Tony and I appreciate Jack for having a vision about how to—about how to make America a better place, one neighborhood at a time.

A President must set great goals worthy of a great nation. We're a great nation. Therefore, a President must set big goals. I set a goal for this country to make the world more peaceful by spreading freedom. Freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is God's gift to each and every individual in the world.

I set a great goal here at home. I want the American Dream, the great hope of our country, to extend in every neighborhood in our country. I want every single person in this land to feel welcome and wanted and

hopeful. It's a great domestic goal. And of course, when you think about setting goals, you've got to think about the tactics and strategies to achieve a goal. It's one thing to set a goal; it's another thing to actually meet the goal.

And one of the reasons I'm so thrilled to be here with Tony Evans is because he helped me understand how to best meet that goal. He probably didn't realize it at the time, but there's something about "mysterious ways." [*Laughter*] We were together in Greenville, Texas, in 1996. It's an unusual place for, you know, a Governor and a famous pastor to meet. But we were there because we were worried about racial reconciliation as a result of some fires that had destroyed church.

And I'll never forget his speech. It's stuck with me to this day. As a matter of fact, what I'm telling you is it's helped formulate policy, first at State level, now the Federal level, because he got up and he said, in speaking about programs meant to help people, welfare programs—he said, you know, get rid of your welfare programs, think differently. He said the best welfare programs are on every corner in America. They're open 24 hours a day. They've got a workforce that is guided by an ancient guidebook whose tenets have stood the test of time. They've got a motto over the door that says, "Love your neighbor like you would like to be loved yourself."

Tony went on to explain why faith-based programs, programs that emanate out of faith institutions work so well. He told the story; maybe he has told it to you. If he has, I've got to repeat it because the TV cameras are here. [*Laughter*] He said he's reminded of the time when a fellow had a house and he got a crack on the wall. And he went and got a painter or a plasterer, and a fellow came and covered it up. And two weeks later, the crack reappeared. And so he said, "Well, I better get another painter." And he did. And he repainted the crack. But it reappeared again. He finally got a wise painter who said, "Sir, you'll never fix the crack until you fix the foundation." Project Turn Around fixes the foundation.

That's what we're here to herald, programs such as Project Turn Around. It's got such a wonderful sense of mission. It says, "to rebuild lives from the inside out." It's a powerful statement, isn't it? Really think about it—"to rebuild lives," that's a hopeful goal for our country. We want people to realize the great potential of America. Some lives have to be rebuilt. And it didn't say "from the outside in," it said "from the inside out." It's a faith-based initiative built from the inside out, not from the outside in.

Listen to what you do through this ministry. There's a thousand volunteers who provide shelter and food and clothing. There's marriage counseling. It's vital that we have strong families in America. And they provide marriage counseling. Job training—somebody walks in this building, and they want to work. They just—there's human dignity that comes from work, and they can find a chance to train for jobs right here in Project Turn Around. Advice on starting a small business—that warms my heart. If you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country. There's nothing better than somebody realizing their dreams by starting and owning their own business. It's uniquely—not "uniquely," it's inherently American that people are able to do that right here. Who would think that in a church you would have a program to teach you how to start your own business? Social entrepreneurs think that way.

Project Turn Around is a complete program. A woman can find help during a crisis pregnancy. There's a tenderness and a practicality to Project Turn Around. This program is a beacon for Dallas. And this program is a model for the Nation.

We just came from the dedication of the Education and Youth Center. If you haven't been there yet, you need to go take a look. It's impressive. The brick and mortar is impressive. The architectural design is fantastic. What's more fantastic is what's going to take place inside the building.

I'm appreciative of the idea of the Fellowship Christian Academy taking root and taking wing here. This is a program which challenges the soft bigotry of low expectations. It raises standards. It believes every child can learn. See, that's important in education. We must challenge the mediocrity of a system. We must not let people just get shuffled

through because their skin happens to be black. You know, people can't quit on a child. No child should be left behind. This school and this building understands that.

But the building across the street not only houses the school, it also houses a mentoring program that gathers children from 60 schools. Five thousand children a week are mentored. That's powerful; that is a powerful program.

One of my passions—and I spoke to the Congress about this at my State of the Union—was to help the children whose mom or dad may be in prison. My hope is that—and I know that Tony understands this—the mentoring program for that child, those children are necessary for the country to be hopeful for every single citizen. What this program understands and what I hope other programs around the Nation understand is that by mentoring a child, you shape the character of a child. And it's a high calling in life, because that influence reaches to eternity.

As I said, Government can hand out money—and we will, and that's an important aspect—but it cannot put hope in people's hearts. See, that's the disconnect. It can't put hope in people's lives. We must understand that amidst our plenty, there are people who hurt, deeply hurt. And the deepest needs are oftentimes found in the human heart. In order to help that need, people need to know they're valued and wanted. People need to know a higher power that is bigger than their problems.

What the faith-based programs say, time after time after time, is that miracles are possible when somebody puts their arm around a neighbor and says, "God loves you. I love you. And you can count on us both." Faith-based programs work. They are able to address the deepest needs of our heart.

And so when I heard Tony speak at Greenville, I began to act. It touched my heart, what he had to say. I wanted everybody to realize the vast potential then of the State of Texas, now all across America. So I started to work on and think about faith-based programs. They're effective. They're so effective that it points to a new role for government, a new political philosophy.

But first, let me say Government has no business funding religious worship or teaching. They don't want the church to be the state, and we don't want the state to be the church. However, our Government should support the good work of religious people who are changing America.

What does that mean from a practical sense, from where I sit? What does that mean? It means this, that when Government gives contracts to provide social services, religious groups should have an equal chance to compete. That's what that means. And when we make decisions on public funding, we should not focus on the religion you practice but on the results you deliver.

This has not been the attitude of government; let's be frank about it. The attitude of government, particularly in Washington, has said religious groups need not apply. That's the way it has been. We're missing an opportunity to help change lives and to meet a major goal in our country, which is everyone should realize the great vast potential of America.

If you're allowed to apply for grants on that rare occasion, some are asked to change their board of directors, to remove the cross from the wall, to change the very things that make the faith-based program effective. And I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about. There's the Orange County Rescue Mission in Tustin, California. It's a fantastic initiative. They applied for funding from the Housing and Urban Development. We call it HUD. HUD said fine, but it had a few conditions to meet. In other words, there was access, perhaps, to Federal money, but let me tell you the conditions. The Rescue Mission had to form a secular nonprofit. They had to ban all religious activities from their facility. They had to rename their chapel and auditorium.

It's hard to be a faith-based program when you're forbidden from practicing your faith. It's hard to change hearts when you can't use the power you've got to change the hearts. Government action like this is pure discrimination. And when Government discriminates against religious groups, it is not the groups who suffer. The real loss is felt by the hungry who do not get fed, by the addicts who don't get help and treatment, by the children who

drift toward self-destruction. For the sake of so many people in need, this country must support the armies of compassion.

I asked Congress to join me and pass what I called the Faith-Based Initiative, which would help change the culture of Washington and the behavior of bureaucracies. They have stalled. So I just signed an Executive order. The Executive order says that the Federal Government will have a level playing field when religious groups apply for Federal money. There will not be discrimination. That's what it says, pure and simple. Every bureaucrat in Washington who might be tempted to fall back to the old ways now knows exactly where I stand.

And we've set up faith-based offices. We're trying to change the culture, see. We're trying to change an attitude. So we set up faith-based offices in several important Cabinet departments. And that's important. This is important for people who are charged with good policy to have a faith-based office that will work directly with the social entrepreneurs of America, the Tony Evanses of the world, so they get a sympathetic ear and get help, not a cold shoulder.

And there's some changes. Slowly but surely, the culture is changing. Just last month, the Department of Health and Human Services finalized regulations that helped open up three programs to greater competition—in other words, began to level the playing field. Programs in which religious faith-based programs—by the way, I'm talking about Christians and Jewish people and Muslims, Hindus, people of all faiths. See, we've all heard that call to love a neighbor.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, now opening up for grants. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, is now opening up for grants. The Community Service Block Grant Program is opening up for grants from faith-based institutions. These are billions of dollars of money now available for new social spending.

Let me tell you, by new social spending I mean spending dollars in a new way, in a way that's effective, in a way that will help change lives in a positive and constructive way. See, we want everybody in this country, every person—we want the addict; we want the single lonely mom; we want the child, the dyslexic child—all to feel a part of the future of this country.

Last month, HUD finalized new regulations that apply to aid programs covering $7.6 billion so that now religious groups that build housing will no longer face discrimination when they seek HUD funds. That's important. We want churches in the middle of neighborhoods that may need new housing to be able to have a chance to access some money to provide new housing. We have a minority homeownership gap in America that needs to be closed. We've got a program in front of Congress to help people with the downpayment. HUD has got a program to help people understand the fine print. We're trying to simplify contracts. But in order to help close the homeownership gap, it seems to make sense to allow inner-city churches to become active builders of homes, affordable homes, so people can find housing in the neighborhoods in which they worship.

Remember, I told you about the program in Orange County, the Orange County Rescue Mission. It has now reapplied for a contract for HUD. It doesn't have to force to—be forced to abide by those rules, those rules that make people nervous. Listen, nobody wants to apply for Federal grants if you think you have to change your mission. Nobody in their right mind is going to say, "Look, let me—let me access some of your money, but I've got to change the way I think." It defeats the purpose.

We're making changes of the culture in Washington, DC. It takes awhile, but we're working on it. And the fact that I can come here—[*applause*]—and the fact that I can come here and herald this program as a successful program helps change the culture. There's nothing like success to change cultures.

We've got some other projects here in Dallas. The Builders of Hope in West Dallas is a faith-based group building new homes for low-income families, which HUD is supporting. HHS is supporting the Faith Walk Center in Dallas, a program which fights drug abuse amongst young people. You've got to understand that sometimes, and a lot of times, the best way to help the addict, a person who is stuck on drugs and alcohol,

is to change their heart. See, if you change their heart, then they change their behavior. I know.

We've got initiatives I've been talking to Tony about—he knows about this—called the Compassion Capital Fund. Sometimes, entrepreneurs need startup capital, whether it be a business or the social entrepreneur needs startup capital. I don't think Evans needs startup capital. [*Laughter*] I think we're beyond the startup capital phase here at this fantastic, fantastic church. But it gives programs startup money and expansion money directly to the social entrepreneurs, and that's important. I'm calling on Congress to increase the budget to $100 million this year; they need to triple the amount of money available for this program.

And so what I'm telling you is, is that the best way to meet a national goal is to rally the strength of America. The strength of America is the people of America. And the people of America, a lot of people in America understand there's a higher authority than their Government and respond to that higher authority. All the levels of government—and I can only speak for the Federal Government, but I might be able to affect the State Government and local government by just speaking—[*laughter*]—but all levels of government, the Federal Government, the State of Texas and all States, the city of Dallas and all cities, ought not to fear programs based upon faith. All levels of government must understand the power of faith programs to make the communities and States and country in which we live a better place. It's the reality. This is living proof of it right here at Project Turn Around.

I love our country. I love what we stand for. We're a strong nation. And in this world today, we need to be strong. We need to defend ourselves, and we will. And we need to promote the peace, and we will. And when we see suffering around the world, this country should not turn its back. We're strong, but we're incredibly compassionate as a nation. This proud country, America, is leading the world in incredibly important work, like the work of human rescue for those who are dying from AIDS on the continent of Africa.

And we need to be strong at home too, strong of heart and strong of soul. Project Turn Around and other successful programs around our country show the strength, show the strength that bends down to help the child and the stranger and the outcast.

I want to thank you all so very much for your welcome. I want to thank you for your compassion and your care. I want to thank you for laying those strong foundations which help those who hurt, because by laying that strong foundation, you're changing America one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

God bless your work, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:18 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony T. Evans, senior pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship; and entertainer Michael W. Smith.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Luncheon in Columbus, Ohio

October 30, 2003

Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. It is great to be back in Columbus. I feel comfortable coming here. I like good football. I like to be around good people. And my grandfather was raised here. I don't know if you know that, but Prescott S. Bush was raised in Columbus, Ohio, and the last time I came to Ohio, I said I was proud of the fact that my paternal grandfather was raised here. And my mother got me on the phone. She said, "You forgot about your maternal grandfather, Marvin; he grew up in Dayton." So, Mother, if you're paying attention—[*applause*]. I'm proud to be in Ohio, because my two grandfathers grew up in Ohio.

I'm proud of my family roots here. I am proud of what you all did in the year 2000. And I want to thank you for coming. Today we're laying the foundation for what is going to be an Ohio victory and a national victory in the fall of 2004. And I'm getting ready. I'm loosening up. [*Laughter*] But the political season will come in its own time. I have got a job to do. I've got a job to do for all Americans, and that is to keep this Nation secure and strong and prosperous and free.

My one regret about this event today is that Laura isn't traveling with me. She is a fabulous First Lady. She's doing a great job. She is working her way down to Crawford,

where we'll spend the night tonight. She is stopping off in Tyler, Texas, to do a little political work herself. And then we're going to spend some time on the weekend, although I'm going to take off on Saturday. We've got some Governors' races coming up. But we're looking forward to getting some quality time together after spending a lot of quality time together on the airplane when we traveled throughout the Far East on a very successful trip. I want you to know our alliances with our friends are strong, and the world is more peaceful for it.

Speaking about a man who married well, so did your Governor. And I'm honored the first lady of Ohio is with us. Hope Taft, thank you for coming. And I'm proud to call Governor Taft my friend. I want to thank you for your service to your great State and appreciate your leadership.

We've got other officials here. The Lieutenant Governor, Jennette Bradley, is with us. Ken Blackwell is with us. Joe Deters is with us. Jim Petro, the attorney general, Betty Montgomery, the State auditor—all friends and all great leaders for the State of Ohio. Thank you all for coming.

I'm honored that members of the statehouse are here, particularly the speaker of the house, Larry Householder. Sorry he didn't bring all his kids with him. [*Laughter*] Maybe the person serving the meals isn't sorry he brought all his kids with him. I think he said he's got six or seven kids, which is pretty darn good, Speaker. And I want to thank the president of the senate, Senator Doug White, for being here as well. I thank the legislators for coming. I'm proud to have your support, and I'm counting on your support as we get in this election cycle.

I selected a man from Ohio, from Cincinnati, Ohio, to be the national finance chairman of this campaign, and he's doing a terrific job. His name is Mercer Reynolds. I'm proud to call him friend. I'm proud he has taken on such a vital role for the Bush-Cheney 2004 campaign. I also want to thank Tim Timken and Bill DeWitt and Jo Ann Davidson for their hard work all across the State of Ohio. I want to thank the cochairmen of this event for making this an incredibly successful event. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are with us today: the party chairman, Bob Bennett; Michael Colley, who is the national committeeman; Martha Moore, the national committeewoman.

I'm honored you all are here. I'm going to need you and count on you to energize the grassroots here in the State of Ohio, to man the phones and put up the signs and mail the letters. I want you to remind people that when you do so, this administration has got a hopeful, optimistic vision for every single American.

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems instead of passing them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities and not let them slip away. This administration is meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We've captured or killed many key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and in Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance, and those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and today they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed and morale was beginning to suffer, so we increased the defense budget to prepare for the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession, and then our country was attacked, and we had some scandals in corporate America, and we marched to war, all of which affected the confidence of the American people. But we acted. We took the lead. We passed tough new laws to hold corporate criminals to account. And to get the economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people.

I know that when Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find a job. So we returned more money to the people to help them raise their families. We reduced taxes on dividends

and capital gains to encourage investment. We gave small businesses incentives to expand and to hire new people. With all these actions, we're laying the foundations for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so that every one of our citizens has a chance to realize the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, and there wasn't much action. So I acted. I called for and the Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms in a generation. I believe that every child can learn. And this country ought to expect every child to learn. In return for Federal money, we have begun to ask the question, are you teaching our children? Are you holding up high standards? Are you willing to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations? The days of excuse-making are over in public education. We expect results in every classroom so that not one single child is left behind.

We reorganized our Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better safeguard our ports and borders and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Ohio's manufacturers and farmers and ranchers. We passed budget agreements that is helping to maintain much needed spending discipline in Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle. We have kept our word, and we have made progress for the American people.

The United States Congress shares in the achievements. I thank the Speaker, Denny Hastert, and I thank Majority Leader Bill Frist for their hard work. We're working to try to change the tone in Washington. There's too much politics in the Nation's Capital, too much zero-sum attitude. We've got to lift the rhetoric and focus on results. And that's what we're working to do in the Nation's Capital, results for all the people.

And those are the kind of people I've asked to serve in my administration. When you're sitting around your coffee shops and community centers, you're talking up the campaign—which I hope you do—remind the people that I put together a great team on behalf of the American people—people from all walks of life, people who have come to our Nation's Capital to serve their country, people like Dick Cheney, our country's greatest Vice President we've ever had. Mother may have a different opinion. [*Laughter*]

In 2½ years, we have done a lot, if you think about it. We have come far, but our work is only beginning. I have set great goals worthy of a great nation. First, America is committed to expanding the realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every single citizen has a chance to work and to succeed and to realize the great promise of America. It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it.

Our war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest; we will not tire; we will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

We are confronting that danger in Iraq, where Saddam Hussein holdouts and foreign terrorists are desperately trying to throw Iraq into chaos by attacking coalition forces and aid workers and innocent Iraqis. They know that the advance of freedom in Iraq would be a major defeat for the cause of terror. This collection of killers is trying to shake the will of the United States of America. And we will not be intimidated.

We are aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq. We will defeat them there so that we do not have to face them in our own country. We continue to call on other nations to help build a free country in Iraq. After all, it will make the world more secure when this happens. We're standing with the Iraq people as they assume more of their own defense and move toward self-government. And these aren't easy tasks. But they're essential tasks. They're essential for the future of our children and grandchildren. We will finish what we have begun in Iraq, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations

don't support terror. Free nations do not attack their neighbors. Free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And I believe that freedom is the right of every person. And I believe that freedom is the future of every nation.

This country also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. And we have duties in this world. When we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, America will not turn away. This great, mighty Nation is leading the world in confronting a terrible disease on the continent of Africa. This Nation is bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. This great land is leading the world in this incredibly important work of human rescue.

We face challenges here at home as well. I'm about to go to a business here in Ohio to talk about the economy. My attitude is that anybody—if anybody who wants to work in Ohio or in America is looking for a job and can't find a job, it says we've got a problem. I'll continue to work to create the conditions in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses, the conditions necessary for the entrepreneurial spirit to flourish. We want everybody working in America. We're making progress, but we will not stop until there are jobs aplenty for those who are looking for work.

We have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. Congress is taking historic action to improve the lives of our older citizens. For the first time—hear this—for the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and the Senate have passed reforms to increase the choices for our seniors and to provide coverage for prescription drugs. The House and the Senate must iron out their differences. They must come together and get a bill to my desk soon. We have a promise to keep to our seniors, and we must modernize the Medicare system for those of us who are fixing to become seniors.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. People who have been harmed by a bad doctor deserve their day in court. Yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for rich settlements. Frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, and they therefore affect the Federal budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue which requires a national solution. I proposed a good bill to solve the medical liability issue all across America. It was passed by the House. It is stuck in the Senate. Your two Senators are good votes on this issue. Some Senators need to hear loud and clear that not one single person has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. We need medical liability reform now.

I have a responsibility as the President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal bench, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some of the Members of the United States Senate are trying to keep my nominees off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

This Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. If you're worried about manufacturing jobs in Ohio, you need an energy plan. It's hard to hire people if you can't find energy. I proposed a bill two years ago to the Congress, a bill which encourages us to use, in environmentally friendly ways, the resources at our disposal. We need clean coal technology in America. We need more natural gas. We need to encourage alternative sources of energy. We need to encourage conservation. We need to make sure the electricity system is reliable. As the people of northern Ohio found out, it's not that reliable at times. [*Laughter*] We need to modernize the system. We need an energy bill. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, the Congress needs to complete the energy bill and get it to my desk.

A strong and prosperous nation must also be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, which means we must apply the

best and most innovative ideas to help our fellow citizens who are in need. There are a lot of men and women who want to end their dependence on government. They want to find work. They want to become independent through hard work, so we must build on the success of the welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our citizens. Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their communities and their country.

Both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to help support the armies of compassion, which exists right here in Columbus, Ohio—they exist in every city in Ohio—the armies of compassion who are mentoring our children, caring for the homeless, who offer hope to the addicted. People of all faiths—Christians, Jewish, Muslims, Hindus—have heard a universal call to love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves. This Nation should not fear faith. We should welcome programs based upon faith to answer the deepest needs of the human heart which exist in our society.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the dignity and the pride that comes from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their home. We have a minority homeownership gap in America. I presented a plan to Congress to close that gap. The more people that own their home, the better off America will be. We want people owning and managing their own health care plans and their own retirement accounts. We want more people owning their own business because we understand that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

A compassionate society is one in which people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. The culture of America is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "You got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life.

If you are fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you are responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we would like to be loved ourself. The culture of service and responsibility is growing here in America. I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps. If you're interested, you can go on the web page and look it up. It's a chance to—for people to serve their country, to serve their community, to help a neighbor who's in need. And the response has been great. It really has been. People want to serve. People want to—want to help their country by helping somebody who might be struggling.

Policemen and firefighters and people who wear this Nation's uniform remind us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use our strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Columbus. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft, Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, and Treasurer of State Joseph T. Deters of Ohio; Jo Ann Davidson, chairperson for the Ohio Valley region, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.;

Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; Michael F. Colley, Ohio national committeeman, and Martha C. Moore, Ohio national committeewoman, Republican National Committee; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at the Central Aluminum Company in Columbus

October 30, 2003

Thanks for coming. I'm honored to be here in Columbus, Ohio. I appreciate so very much the warm hospitality. I like to come to good football country. I like to be with good, hard-working people, like the people here who are sharing the stage with me. I like to be with entrepreneurs. I like to be in the State where both my grandfathers were raised. My dad's dad was raised right here in Columbus. My mother's dad was raised in Dayton. So I feel quite at home here in the great State of Ohio.

I appreciate the good folks at Central Aluminum for letting me come and interrupt the work day. I've got some important things to talk about. The first thing I want to remind people of is, we're a great country because we've got great workers in America. The most productive workforce in the world is right here in America. Because of the spirit—the entrepreneurial spirit and the work ethic of America, our economy is strong, and it's getting stronger.

The figures for the third quarter—the economic figures for the third quarter show that the economy grew at an annual rate of 7.2 percent. That's the fastest growth we've had in nearly 20 years. Exports are expanding. Investment is rising. Housing construction is growing. The tax relief we passed is working. We left more money in the hands of the American people, and the American people are moving this economy forward.

We cannot expect economic growth numbers like this every quarter. Yet, by continuing a pro-growth agenda, we will sustain growth and job creation in this country. We're on the right track, but we've got work to do, and I want to talk today about the need for this Nation to develop a comprehensive energy plan to make sure our fellow citizens can find work.

I appreciate Gale Roshon for opening up the plant. Thank you, sir. I want to thank John Wright. And I want to thank Bill, who showed me how the machine works. [*Laughter*] I'm honored that the State officials are with us today. Your fine Governor, Bob Taft, and the Lieutenant Governor have joined us, for which I'm grateful. The secretary of state and State auditor are with us. We've got local officials. We've got a lot of people who just came to say hello to the President, and I'm grateful. Thank you for coming.

This Nation has been through a lot in the last 2½ years. We have been challenged. And I've set some big goals for our country. One, we believe in freedom and peace. That's what we believe. And I also accept the responsibility of making sure this Nation is secure. This Nation must never forget the lessons of September the 11th in 2001. We must stay on the offensive against terrorists who would do harm to the American people.

We can't forget the lessons of September the 11th. We must understand there are people who hate what we stand for. And so we must find them and bring them to justice. We must defeat them where they hide so we don't have to face them in our own cities. I'm confident in the justice of our cause. I'm confident in the character and resolve of the American people. I'm confident in the skill and the honor of the American military.

And likewise, I am confident in the entrepreneurial spirit of this country, and I'm confident in our workforce. And the reason I'm confident is because I know what we've been through. We've been through a lot. The country was in recession when we first showed up in Washington, DC. And then the terrorists attacked us, and it hurt our economy. We went through a lot when the terrorists attacked. Not only do we have to reorder our thinking about how to make America secure, we had to remember the lessons when it came to protecting our country. But it also hurt our—the attacks hurt our country, hurt our economy. It set us back, and we began to recover from the attacks, in and out of recession. And then unfortunately we had some corporate citizens who forgot to tell the truth. They forgot what it meant to be a responsible citizen and didn't tell the truth to their shareholders and employees.

And then, as you know, we took decisive action to uphold doctrine. One doctrine was, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists." And we went into Afghanistan and freed the people of Afghanistan from the clutches of a barbaric regime, at the same time made our country more secure.

We upheld the demands of the world by removing Saddam Hussein from power, not only for the benefit of the Iraqi people who suffered under this brutal tyrant but for the benefit of the security of the American people and peace in the world. And as we did so, it shook the confidence of the people. It's not a very—it doesn't inspire a lot of confidence when people turn on the TV and say, "march to war." In other words, it creates uncertainty and doubt.

And yet we've overcome all this. We sent a clear signal to the people that forgot to be responsible citizens that if you don't tell the truth, there is going to be serious consequences. And the American people are beginning to see what I meant about serious consequences for those who betrayed the trust. We're obviously doing everything we can to make the country more secure.

We also acted when it came to putting a little wind behind the sails of the entrepreneurs by letting people keep more of their own money. The tax cuts were an important part of our economic recovery. I believe that when people have more money in their pocket, they—you know, they're obviously—they're going to demand an additional good or a service. And in our society, when they demand a good or a service, somebody will produce a good or a service. And when somebody produces that good or a service, it is more likely somebody is going to find a job.

I'm concerned about the stories I read, where people want to find work and can't find work. It means we've got a problem. If there's one person looking for work and can't find work, it says we have a problem. We've got to continue to create the conditions for economic growth. And the tax cut, the two tax cuts were an integral part of creating the conditions for growth.

And so we advocated and the Congress passed broad tax relief. I believe that if you're going to have tax relief you want it to be fair, and everybody who pays taxes ought to get tax relief. The Government should not try to pick and choose winners when it comes to tax relief.

We also understand that the Tax Code should not discourage marriage. So we provided relief—so we reduced the penalty on the marriage penalty. I understand it's hard to raise children, so we raised the child credit from $600 to $1,000 per child. We said the check was going to be in the mail. If you happen to be a mom or a dad raising children, it actually turned out to be in the mail, which was positive for our economy.

We wanted to encourage investment, not discourage investment, in order to enhance the economic recovery, so we cut taxes on dividends and capital gains, and we quadrupled the expense deduction for small-business investment. And that's important. In other words, this tax relief plan not only helped families and individuals, but it also helps small businesses. You say, "Well, why would you want to help small business?" Well, small businesses like this business create the most new jobs. If you're interested in job creation, you've got to focus your plan on small businesses.

So not only do we encourage small businesses to invest, we also, by cutting the taxes on the individuals, allow small businesses to keep more money, because most small businesses are Subchapter S or sole proprietorships, which means they pay tax at the individual income tax rates. Cutting individual income taxes provides capital for small businesses. Small businesses create more jobs, most new jobs in America. The tax cut was good for small businesses. The tax cut was good for job creation.

Not only were the third-quarter growth figures encouraging, there's some—also other encouraging signs. Housing starts are strong, and that's important, particularly if you're making aluminum siding—[*laughter*]—if you know what I mean. [*Laughter*] After-tax incomes are rising. Inflation is low. Productivity is high. Businesses are now receiving strong orders. Things are improving.

And we've got a choice to make. Just as the economy is coming around, some over in Washington say now is the time to raise taxes. To be fair, they think anytime is a good

time to raise taxes. [*Laughter*] At least they're consistent. [*Laughter*] I strongly disagree. Tax relief put this Nation on the right path, and I intend to keep America on the path to prosperity.

There is still more to do to make sure our fellow citizens can find a job. And so I presented a six-point plan that Congress must act on. I'm going to talk about five parts of it, and then I'm going to spend a little time on the energy part of it.

Small businesses must have affordable health care for their employees. That's why we need association health care plans, so small businesses can pool risk just like big businesses do. Small businesses must be allowed to come together in order to pool risk to provide their employees with reasonably priced health care. And we need to have medical liability reform so that the frivolous lawsuits do not drive up the cost of health care.

Congress must act on medical liability reform. They ought to act to limit the junk lawsuits that harm good businesses. We need to cut useless regulations. We must work to open up markets for Ohio's manufacturers and Ohio's farmers. I want the markets to be open, and I want the playing field to be level, so that we have access.

The tax relief we passed is scheduled to go away. There is a—I'm not sure how to describe it—it's like the Congress giveth, and the Congress taketh away. [*Laughter*] But there is a quirk in the rules which says that a lot of the tax relief had to expire after 10 years. And in the recent tax package, they accelerated some of the expiration dates, which means the child credit will go down, the marriage penalty will go up, individual rates will change. For the sake of job creation, there needs to be certainty in the Tax Code. Entrepreneurs and small-business owners don't need to be trying to constantly guess where the taxes are going to be. People need to plan, and they need to plan for more than—on a more than a one-year horizon. If Congress is truly interested in job creation, they will make all the tax cuts we passed permanent.

To keep this economy moving, to sustain growth far in the future so people can work, we need a sound national energy policy. Every person who owns a home, every person who works on an assembly line, every person who drives a truck or runs a small business depends on reliable, affordable energy. That's what we depend upon. Our economic security and our national security requires secure sources of energy. We must become less reliant on foreign sources of energy.

I've come to Central Aluminum because this company and these employees rely upon reliable sources of energy. The company spends about 30 percent more on natural gas this year than it did last year. That's a cost that makes it hard to expand the workforce, when money goes into a 30-percent increase in your energy bill. By not having enough energy at home, our manufacturing sector is not doing as well as it should be. When the gas prices go up, the manufacturing sector hurts here in Ohio and around the country.

Congress needs to pass a sound energy plan to help deal with the issues that confront this good company, Central Aluminum. First, we need more energy production close to home. We need to produce in our own country, and we need to encourage exploration in our own hemisphere so we're less dependent from other parts of the world. Our Nation and our hemisphere have got natural gas, the energy used right here in this plant. But this resource has been hampered by restrictions on exploration.

Congress should allow reasonable exploration and responsible exploration to bring more natural gas to the market, which will lower the costs of the product. Congress should promote research into the next generation of nuclear plants and encourage investment in existing nuclear plants to expand a clean and unlimited source of energy.

Congress should encourage clean coal technology so that we can use our Nation's most plentiful energy resource in an environmentally responsible way. In other words, the energy bill ought to encourage the use of resources close to home. When you increase supply, it takes pressure off price. We need a commonsense, reasonable energy policy. I call upon Congress to pass that commonsense, reasonable energy policy.

Part of the energy bill I submitted—and by the way, we submitted a package to Congress 2 years ago and are kind of grinding through all the details now—but part of that package says America needs a better infrastructure as well. We need better pipelines, gas terminals, and powerlines so that the flow of energy is reliable.

You might remember what happened last summer. I certainly do. The rolling blackout affected this State of Ohio. That ought to be a signal that we need to modernize the electricity grid. The bill we're trying to get out of Congress understands that. The current grid is old, and it's inefficient in places. Incredibly enough, Federal law discourages new investment in the infrastructure. You got old laws on the books that need to be changed. We're heading into a new era. We've got to think new. We've got to be ready for the 21st century. By keeping investors from entering the electricity and the natural gas business, it stifles the capacity to provide more electricity and more natural gas. And remember, when you increase the supply of a product, it takes pressure off a price, which means people are more likely to be able to find a job.

We need to encourage new investment in a modern electric grid, ending old rules. We need mandatory, not voluntary, reliability standards for our power companies. We now need to make sure that the placement of new powerlines, which oftentimes get bogged down because local authorities block transmission lines, that the Federal energy officials have the authority to site new powerlines. That's what we need to do. We need to modernize our grid so the lights don't go off in people's homes, so that business owners are able to plan for a stable and expanding workforce. We need to wake up and realize we're heading into the 21st century, and we need a 21st century energy policy, is what we need to do.

And a 21st century energy policy says this country must develop and deploy the latest technology to provide a new generation, a different kind of energy, new sources of energy, cleaner and more efficient energy sources. A lot of companies in Columbus are doing some groundbreaking research on what I'm talking about. For example, we ought to expand tax credits for renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. We ought to see if we can't use technology to diversify our energy supply in a smart way. Congress should fund research in a new hydrogen fuel technology that I called for in my State of the Union. We ought to make sure that we use ethanol from corn and biodiesel made from soybeans. It seems to me to make sense that we ought to use our technology and know-how to grow our way out of dependence on foreign sources of energy.

In other words, we need a comprehensive plan. We need to encourage production, and we need to encourage conservation. We need to use the energy resources we've got at hand in an environmentally friendly way. And we need to advance new kinds of energy. But we've got to get after it. And that's my message to the United States Congress: Resolve your differences; understand that if you're interested in people finding a job, we need an energy policy. That's why I'm here. I want these people working. I want their friends to be able to find jobs. Get the bill done.

Now, we've overcome a lot in this country, and there's still more to do. We're making tremendous progress. But we can't rest. We can't rest. We're making great progress in helping people find a job. But as I said, so long as one person is looking for work, this administration will continue to figure out ways to encourage economic growth by empowering the entrepreneurs of America and the small businesses to do smart things to create a condition for economic growth. We'll continue to stay on the offensive when it comes to keeping the Nation secure.

As well I will continue to speak to the great character of the American people and to call people to action in order to help people understand that the American Dream is meant for them. Listen, there are people amidst our plenty who hurt, people who wonder whether or not America is meant for them. And I understand those challenges, but I also understand the strength of the country. It lies in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. I'm probably looking at people who are doing what I'm about to say—ask you to do, but there are thousands of people in our country who love a neighbor just like they'd like to be loved themselves, who are mentoring a

child, who are helping feed the hungry, who are providing shelter for the homeless.

See, our society is changing and will continue to change one heart and one soul at a time, because our fellow citizens have heard the call to love a neighbor. And my call to you all is if you see somebody who hurts, help him. Remember that Government can hand out money—we do a pretty good job of it at times—but what we can't do is put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in people's lives. That's done when a fellow citizen puts their arm around somebody who hurts and says, "I love you. What can I do to help you?"

Now, this is a fabulous country. We've met the challenges that have been put to us. There will be other challenges to come. I stand confident before you, knowing that we can meet any challenge because of the greatness of the people who live in America.

Thanks for coming by today. May God bless you all, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in the plant. In his remarks, he referred to Gale Roshon, owner, John Wright, general manager, and Bill Haines, press operator, Central Aluminum Co.; Gov. Bob Taft, Lt. Gov. Jennette Bradley, Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, and State Auditor Betty Montgomery of Ohio; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Passage of the "Healthy Forests Restoration Act"

October 30, 2003

I commend the Senate for passing the "Healthy Forests Restoration Act." The bipartisan support for this commonsense legislation demonstrates that we are united in our goal of returning our Nation's forests to health by eliminating unnatural overgrowth and promoting early community involvement in forest management planning.

Restoring forest health is important to the safety of our communities and to the protection of wildlife, endangered species, water supplies, and forest resources. I urge the House and Senate to quickly resolve the differences in their bills so that I can sign this important legislation and we can fully implement my Healthy Forests Initiative.

Statement on Action in the Senate To Block an Up-or-Down Vote on the Nomination of Judge Charles W. Pickering, Sr.

October 30, 2003

Today a minority of Senators once again blocked an outstanding judicial nominee from receiving an up-or-down vote in the United States Senate. The nomination of Judge Charles Pickering has been languishing in the Senate for over 2 years. He is a good, fair-minded man, and the treatment he has received by a handful of Senators is a disgrace. Judge Pickering was previously confirmed by the Senate and has led a distinguished career, including as a Federal district court judge for over a decade. He has wide bipartisan support from those who know him best.

More than one-third of my nominees for the courts of appeals are still awaiting a vote. The continued obstruction by a willful minority of the Senate is bad for our country, harmful for the provision of justice for all Americans, and damaging to the smooth functioning of our judicial system. It hurts America, and it is wrong.

One year ago today, I proposed a commonsense plan to return fairness and dignity to the judicial confirmation process. This plan, which would apply no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate, included specific proposals to fix the underlying problems that have long undermined the confirmation process. One year later, certain Senators are continuing their obstructionist tactics and are continuing to filibuster fine men and women who would make outstanding appeals court judges.

I again urge the Senate to put aside partisan politics and work to find a solution that will repair the process and ensure that all judicial nominees are treated fairly and that all Americans experience timely justice in our Federal courts. As I have said before, let each Senator vote how he or she thinks best, but give the nominees a vote.

Proclamation 7727—National Hospice Month, 2003

October 30, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Hospice care plays an important role in American medicine by easing a patient's suffering while reaffirming individual dignity in a familiar, comfortable environment. Across our Nation, hospice care providers are assisting in hospitals, nursing homes, and private residences, offering physical, emotional, and spiritual support to patients who often have a short life expectancy.

Hospice teams consist of physicians, nurses, social workers, counselors, and volunteers who are experts in end-of-life issues. They offer pain management, therapy, nutrition, and other supportive care in the home or other comfortable surroundings, making it easier for patients, family members, and friends to spend time together in their loved one's final days. Hospice experts also offer grief counseling to friends and family members after their loss.

Every stage of human life deserves to be treated with respect and care. I commend all those who work and volunteer as hospice care providers. Their contributions make our Nation a better place.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2003 as National Hospice Month. I encourage Americans to increase their awareness of hospice service and to observe this month with appropriate activities and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-eighth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., November 3, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on November 4.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Reception in San Antonio, Texas

October 30, 2003

The President. Thanks for the warm welcome. It is really good to be home, and it's good to be with so many friends. It seems like old home week here. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you all very much for your friendship and your strong support. I want to thank you for your prayers. I want to thank you for being my friend before I became the President—[*laughter*]—and my friend after I become the President—[*laughter*]—in 2009. No, no, we—[*applause*].

This is a fantastic event tonight. It not only lifts my spirits to be with a lot of people with whom I've served in the past and a lot of friends, but we're laying the foundation for what is going to be a great national victory in 2004. I'm loosening up—[*laughter*]—and I'm getting ready. But politics will come in its own time, because I've got a job to do.

Audience member. And you're doing a great one.

The President. Well, thank you very much. [*Laughter*] I'm focused on the people's business. I'm doing what's right for this country. I will continue to work to make sure this country is strong and secure, prosperous, and free.

I have a regret, and that is that the First Lady is not with me tonight. She's in Tyler. We're going to meet up in Crawford. She is a fabulous wife, a fabulous mother, and a great First Lady for America.

I want to thank the Loefflers for their friendship and their hard work. It's a fantastically successful event. As I look around, I see folks who hold high office. The chief justice of the supreme court is here, Tom Phillips; the attorney general is here, Greg Abbott; the secretary of agriculture is here, Susan Combs; Albert Hawkins, the commissioner of health and human services; Diane Rath, the workforce commissioner. I see Wentworth is here, the State senator; State Representative Jones and Edmund Kuempel and Ken Mercer. Thank you all for coming. It's great to see you again. I miss my buddies in the statehouse. I've got such fond memories of working with people here in the great State of Texas. It was a fantastic experience.

I also want to thank my friend Mercer Reynolds from Cincinnati, Ohio, who is the national finance chairman for Bush-Cheney. He's doing a great job of——

Audience member. Go Mercer!

The President. ——laying the groundwork. Mercer brought his cousin. [*Laughter*] Most of all, I want to thank you all. Thanks a lot for coming.

In the last 2½ years, our Nation has acted decisively to confront great challenges. I came to this office to solve problems instead of passing them on to future Presidents and future generations. I came to seize opportunities instead of letting them slip away. This administration is meeting the tests of our time.

Terrorists declared war on the United States of America, and war is what they got. We've captured or killed many of the key leaders of the Al Qaida network, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. In Afghanistan and in Iraq, we gave ultimatums to terror regimes. Those regimes chose defiance. Those regimes are no more. Fifty million people in those two countries once lived under tyranny, and today they live in freedom.

Two-and-a-half years ago, our military was not receiving the resources it needed, and morale was beginning to suffer. So we increased the defense budgets to meet the threats of a new era. And today, no one in the world can question the skill and the strength and the spirit of the United States military.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we inherited an economy in recession. And then our country was attacked. And then we had some scandals in corporate America, and war. All those affected the people's confidence, but I acted. We passed tough new laws in Washington, DC, to hold the corporate criminals to account.

And to get the economy going again, I have twice led the United States Congress to pass historic tax relief for the American people. When Americans have more take-home pay to spend, to save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find a job. So we're returning more money to the people to help them raise their families. We're reducing taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage investment. We're giving small businesses incentives to hire new people. With all these actions, this administration has laid the foundation for greater prosperity and more jobs across America so that every single one of our citizens can realize the American Dream.

Two-and-a-half years ago, there was a lot of talk about education reform, but there wasn't much action. So I acted. I called for and the Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act. With a solid bipartisan majority, we delivered the most dramatic education reforms at the Federal level in a generation. In return for Federal money, we expect public schools to teach children how to read and write and add and subtract, because we believe every child can learn to read and write and add and subtract. This administration is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. The days of excuse-making are over. We expect results in every single classroom so that not one single child in America is left behind.

We reorganized our Government and created the Department of Homeland Security to better safeguard our borders and ports and to protect the American people. We passed trade promotion authority to open up new markets for Texas farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs. We passed much needed budget agreements to bring spending discipline to Washington, DC. On issue after issue, this administration has acted on principle, kept its word, and made progress for the American people.

The Congress gets credit for these achievements. I've got a great relationship with Speaker Denny Hastert and Majority Leader Bill Frist. We're working hard to focus on results and to get rid of the needless politics that dominates the Nation's Capital. We're doing the work for the people. And those are the kind of people I've asked to join this administration. I put together a fantastic, diverse group of people to serve the American people. We've had no finer Vice President than Dick Cheney. Mother may have a second opinion. [*Laughter*]

In 2½ years, we have done a lot. We have come far, but our work is only beginning. I've set great goals worthy of a great nation. First, America is committed to expanding the

realm of freedom and peace for our own security and for the benefit of the world. And second, in our own country, we must work for a society of prosperity and compassion so that every single citizen, every citizen, has a chance to work and to succeed and realize the great promise of our land.

It is clear that the future of freedom and peace depend on the actions of America. This Nation is freedom's home. We are freedom's defender. We welcome this charge of history, and we are keeping it.

The war on terror continues. The enemies of freedom are not idle, and neither are we. This country will not rest. We will not tire. We will not stop until this danger to civilization is removed.

We are confronting that danger in Iraq, where Saddam Hussein holdouts and foreign terrorists are desperately trying to throw Iraq into chaos by attacking coalition forces and international aid workers and innocent Iraqis. They know that the advance of freedom in Iraq would be a major defeat in the cause of terror. This collection of killers is trying to shake the will of America and the civilized world, and this country will not be intimidated.

We are aggressively striking the terrorists in Iraq, defeating them there so we will not have to face them in our own country. We're calling other nations to help Iraq to build a free country, which will make the world more secure. We're standing with the Iraqi people as they assume more of their own defense and move toward self-government. These aren't easy tasks, but they're essential tasks. We will finish what we have begun, and we will win this essential victory in the war on terror.

Our greatest security comes from the advance of human liberty, because free nations do not support terror, free nations do not attack their neighbors, free nations do not threaten the world with weapons of mass terror. Americans believe that freedom is the deepest need and hope of every human heart. And I believe that freedom is the right of every person, and I believe that freedom is the future of every nation.

America also understands that unprecedented influence brings tremendous responsibilities. We have duties in the world, and when we see disease and starvation and hopeless poverty, we will not turn away. This great, strong Nation is leading the world. On the continent of Africa, America is now committed to bringing the healing power of medicine to millions of men and women and children now suffering with AIDS. This great land is doing incredibly important work of human rescue.

We've got challenges here at home as well, and our actions will prove that we're equal to the challenges. We had some good news today on the economy. But let me tell you this, so long as anybody who wants to work can't find a job, means that I must continue to create the conditions for economic vitality and growth, to make sure the great entrepreneurial spirit of America is alive and well in every corner of this country.

We have a duty to keep our commitment to America's seniors by strengthening and modernizing Medicare. Congress has taken historic action to improve the lives of older Americans. For the first time since the creation of Medicare, the House and Senate passed reforms to increase the choices for seniors and provide coverage for prescription drugs. The next step is for both Houses to reconcile their differences and get a bill to my desk soon. We owe it to America's seniors, and we owe a modern Medicare system to those of us who are going to be America's seniors.

For the sake of our health care system, we need to cut down on the frivolous lawsuits which increase the cost of medicine. I appreciate the reforms that Governor Perry and the legislature did here in Texas. We recognize that people who have been harmed by a bad doc deserve their day in court, yet the system should not reward lawyers who are simply fishing for a rich settlement. Because frivolous lawsuits drive up the cost of health care, they affect the Federal budget. Medical liability reform is a national issue which requires a national solution. We proposed good law to the House and Senate. The House of Representatives passed a good bill. The bill is stuck in the United States Senate. I'm proud to report, our two United States Senators, the Senators from Texas, are on the right side of the issue. Those who have held up this important piece of legislation in the

United States Senate must recognize that not one single person has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit.

I have a responsibility as the President to make sure the judicial system runs well, and I have met that duty. I have nominated superb men and women for the Federal courts, people who will interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. Some Members are trying to keep my nominees, people like Priscilla Owen, off the bench by blocking up-or-down votes. Every judicial nominee deserves a fair hearing and an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. It is time for some of the Members of the United States Senate to stop playing politics with American justice.

The Congress needs to complete work on a comprehensive energy plan. Two years ago, I submitted a plan to the United States Congress, a plan that will promote energy efficiency and conservation, that will develop new technologies, but will encourage exploration in an environmentally friendly way in our own country. For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, the Congress must act so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our strong and prosperous Nation must be a compassionate nation. I will continue to advance our agenda of compassionate conservatism, which means we will apply the best and most innovative ideas to the task of helping our fellow citizens in need. There are still millions of men and women who want to end their dependence on the Government and become independent through hard work. We must build on the success of welfare reform to bring work and dignity into the lives of more of our fellow citizens.

Congress should complete the "Citizen Service Act" so more Americans can serve their community and their country. And both Houses should reach agreement on my Faith-Based Initiative to support the armies of compassion that are mentoring children, that are caring for the homeless, that are offering hope to the addicted. People from all faiths—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu—have heard a universal call. We must welcome that call. In order to heal the broken heart, this country must not fear faith. We must welcome faith in the essential delivery of need for people who hurt.

A compassionate society must promote opportunity for all, including the independence and dignity that come from ownership. This administration will constantly strive to promote an ownership society in America. We want more people owning their own home. This Nation has a minority homeownership gap. I presented a plan to the United States Congress to close that gap. America must act. The Congress must act. We want more people to own and manage their own health care accounts. We want more people to own and manage their own retirement accounts. We want more people owning their own small business. We understand in this administration that when a person owns something, he or she has a vital stake in the future of our country.

In a compassionate society, people respect one another and take responsibility for the decisions they make. The culture of America is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make.

If you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees.

And in the new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourself. The culture of service and responsibility is strong here in America. I started what's called the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been great. Faith-based charities and charitable programs are strong and vibrant. And that's important, really important, to make sure the future of this country is alive and well for every citizen.

Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something

greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation.

We are a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity across our land. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it and know that for our country, the best days lie ahead.

God bless. Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:48 p.m. at the Marriott Rivercenter. In his remarks, he referred to Tom and Nancy Loeffler, event cohosts; Thomas R. Phillips, chief justice, Texas Supreme Court; Greg Abbott, Texas attorney general; Susan Combs, Texas agriculture commissioner; Albert Hawkins, Texas health and human services commissioner; Diane D. Rath, chair and commissioner, Texas Workforce Commission; State Senator Jeff Wentworth and State Representatives Elizabeth Ames Jones, Edmund Kuempel, and Ken Mercer of Texas; Gov. Rick Perry of Texas; and Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

October 25

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

October 26

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

October 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Arnold I. Havens to be General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury.

The President declared a major disaster in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by wildfires on October 21 and continuing.

October 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with President Ion Iliescu of Romania.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with economic advisers.

The White House announced that the President will host NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson for a meeting and working luncheon on November 12.

October 29

In the morning, the President had a breakfast meeting with Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, Senate Minority Leader Thomas A. Daschle, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and House Majority Leader Tom DeLay to discuss legislative priorities. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. He then met with the National Security Council and later with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Later in the morning, the President participated in a roundtable discussion on Medicare with Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy G. Thompson, AARP President James G. Parkel, and a group of senior citizens.

In the afternoon, on the South Steps, the President participated in a photo opportunity with White House interns. Later, he traveled to Dallas, TX.

In the evening, the President traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

October 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Columbus, OH. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had an intelligence briefing. Upon arrival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Leslie Gagne.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to San Antonio, TX, where, upon arrival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Thom Ricks.

In the evening, the President returned to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

October 31

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy to discuss reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Samuel Wright Bodman to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eugene Welch Hickock, Jr., to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brian Carlton Roseboro to be Under Secretary of the Treasury for Domestic Finance.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted October 29

Arnold I. Havens,
of Virginia, to be General Counsel for the Department of the Treasury, vice David Aufhauser.

Susan K. Sclafani,
of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education, Department of Education, vice Carol D'Amico, resigned.

Submitted October 31

Walter D. Kelley, Jr.,
of Virginia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, vice Henry C. Morgan, Jr., retiring.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released October 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to California

Released October 28

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson

Released October 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Northern Ireland Elections

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1900, H.R. 3229, and S. 1591

Released October 30

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Transcript of a press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Greg Mankiw and National Economic Council Chairman Stephen Friedman

Fact sheet: Tax Relief Helps Economic Growth

Released October 31

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Transcript of remarks by National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice to the National Legal Center for the Public Interest in New York City on October 30

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 75

Acts Approved by the President

Approved October 28

H.R. 1474 / Public Law 108–100
Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act

Approved October 29

H.R. 1900 / Public Law 108–101
To award a congressional gold medal to Jackie Robinson (posthumously), in recognition of his many contributions to the Nation, and to express the sense of the Congress that there should be a national day in recognition of Jackie Robinson

H.R. 3229 / Public Law 108–102
To amend title 44, United States Code, to transfer to the Public Printer the authority over the individuals responsible for preparing indexes of the Congressional Record, and for other purposes

S. 1591 / Public Law 108–103
To redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 48 South Broadway, Nyack, New York, as the "Edward O'Grady, Waverly Brown, Peter Paige Post Office Building"

Proclamations

National Hospice Month—1504
Protection From Pornography Week—1469
United Nations Day—1469

Statements by the President

See also Bill Signings
Senate
Action to block an up-or-down vote on the nomination of Judge Charles W. Pickering, Sr.—1503
Confirmation of Michael O. Leavitt as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency—1485

Statements by the President—Continued

Senate—Continued
Passage of the "Healthy Forests Restoration Act"—1503

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